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EDITOR'S LETTER



Best of BRITISH
Celebrate traditional country living with Laura Ashley's County Show collection. The fabrics and papers are just right for a cheery kitchen. **0333 200 8009, lauraashley.com**



If you're wondering how we are halfway through the year already, you're not alone. The Christmas press shows are about to begin just as I think about removing my trusty cardigan and putting on some sunblock. Whilst there's a lot to be said for forward-planning, we also need to enjoy what we've got in the present moment. I'm sure you'll agree there is a special magic in seeing the English summer unfold and bringing some elements into your home, whether that's a holiday to the seaside (p95) or a trip to Hampton Court Palace (p56). We also bring you a glorious garden and real homes to inspire your decorating this summer, so make the most of it!

Susan Dickerson
EDITOR

This month Period Ideas has been **ENJOYING** *the fine city of Norwich and exploring its glorious past, reading Henrietta Leyser's fabulous social history book* **MEDIEVAL WOMEN**, *discovering classic kitchen and bathrooms with* **HARVEY JONES** *and* **C.P. HART**, *and looking forward to Wimbledon without an umbrella!*

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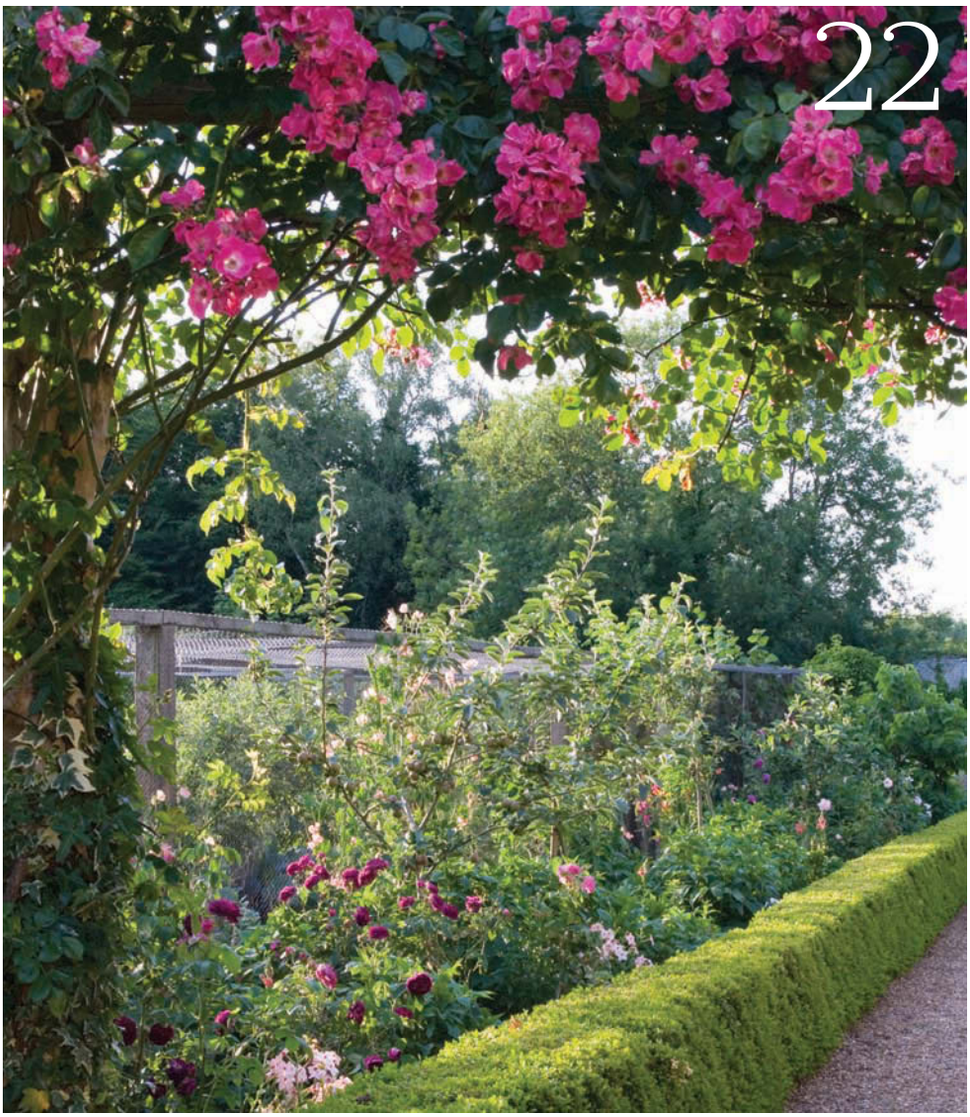
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'Supplier of the year Finalist'







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SEE PAGE 136 TO SUBSCRIBE TODAY

Pay just £6 for your first three issues of *Period Ideas* with free delivery direct to your door. Classic inspiration for your home and garden all year long.

JUNE'S ESSENTIAL SHOPPING LIST

HOME STYLE

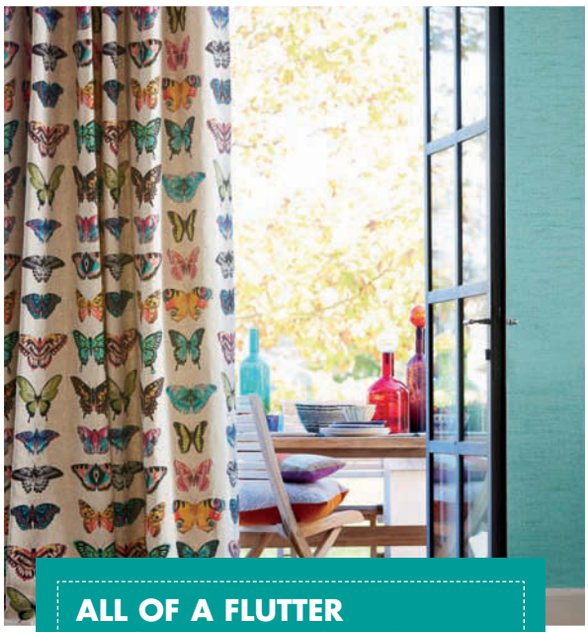
Keep up to date with the latest designs and happenings this month





FRENCH FANCY

Boasting smooth curves and quaint handles, this Flavie French two-drawer bedside table is ideal for injecting a burst of colour into a plain scheme, and also provides handy extra storage.
020 8099 7443, outthereinteriors.com



ALL OF A FLUTTER

Butterflies are set to be a big hit this summer, so furnish your home with these wonderful winged creatures for on-trend interiors. There's a wealth of exquisite and elegant designs to choose from, including this Papilio fabric from Harlequin's Amazilia collection.
0845 123 6815, harlequin.uk.com

LET THERE BE LIGHT

*Create a focal point in your abode with this topan VP6 pendant light. It comes in a variety of vibrant shades, including this chic minty hue. Call **01273 777 810** to find out more, or visit **rume.co.uk** to browse the full collection.*



GET GLOWING

Illuminate your outdoor space with Laura Ashley's stylish square lantern. This pretty and practical vessel is perfect for homing candles and creating a relaxed vibe on balmy summer evenings. **03332 008 009, lauraashley.com**



SUMMER VIBES

George Home's outdoor-inspired meadow collection is bursting with diningware in glorious greens and vibrant yellows. With everything from crockery and cutlery to tablecloths and vases, you can kit out your home in time for summer hosting. Visit **george.com** to browse the full range.

TASTE OF THE TROPICS

With tropical themes taking the interiors industry by storm, prepare for pineapple patterns, flamingo-inspired fabrics and accessories from under the sea. The Linea California Kitsch collection from House of Fraser is ideal for creating an exotic scheme. **0345 602 1073, houseoffraser.co.uk**

TAKE A SEAT

*This striking yellow Hugo chair from Oliver Bonas will fill your garden with even more sun this summer. Made from durable iron, the simplistic and stylish seat is guaranteed to last for many years to come. Call **020 8974 0110** or visit **oliverbonas.com** for more information.*



DIARY DATES

*Discover exotic plants, an inspirational walled garden and beautiful sea views from the Terrace at the National Gardens Scheme open day. On 7th June, you'll get to explore Trengwainton's 25 acres and see special plants which have been nurtured for generations by those with a passion for their beauty. For more information on this unique experience, call **01736 363 148** or visit **nationaltrust.org.uk***

PETAL POWER

Serve up in style using the Tetbury Ary rectangular tray from Berry Red. It features a delicate floral motif with a charming watercolour effect, and is priced at £18.75. **0845 450 3937, berryred.co.uk**





MAKE A SPLASH

The pretty and practical accessories from Next will ensure that your bathroom is brimming with style and sophistication. This teal floral printed towel features a quirky and modern design, which will breathe new life into any washroom. **0333 777 8000, next.co.uk**

Decorating with... HOUSE PLANTS

Add roomscaping to your skillset and become an indoor gardenista

Edited by **SUSAN DICKERSON**



Porcelain ginko vase, £43.95, miafleur.com

There's nothing like going back to nature for inspiration in your home, especially when it comes to designer accessories which you can grow. House plants have become increasingly popular over the past twenty years, with new varieties gracing homes and workplaces across the land. Peace lilies are a relatively new arrival and it is extraordinary to think that bonsai and orchids can now be purchased at large supermarkets as easily as bread and cheese.

GROW FOR IT

People have loved plants since ancient times and the English became really obsessed with growing plants indoors in the Victorian era. Today we are still impressed by the wealth of textures, colours and shapes at the garden centre and the next step is to work out how best to display these treasures at home.

The British gardening expert, Dr D.G Hessayon says, "A house plant can do so much more than just stand on its own in a plant pot on the sideboard. There is a real desire to create decorative features with plants rather than just having them as green pets. Very simply, roomscaping involves understanding and then putting to work the various interior designer rules and ideas which go into the creation of a house plant feature."

STATEMENT PIECE

Dr Hessayon outlines five feature styles for you to consider. You may already have a stand-alone pot which makes a statement because of its use or its eye-catching appeal. Developing this idea brings us to the pot group, which is a collection of stand-alone charmers in which every pot or its holder remains visible. Multiplant containers are making a comeback but need careful maintenance as their contents can grow at different rates. Make sure that pots are removed or hidden from sight. Try a glass garden for plants which are partially or fully enclosed within a glass container, or a water garden if you 'd prefer a feature in which plants are close to, or within, a water container.

Further reading: The House Plant Expert, Book Two, Dr D.G Hessayon, (Transworld) 2005.



GOLDEN *Rules*

Before you treat yourself to some new plants (or rearrange your existing ones) read this expert advice from MiaFleur

- Make sure that the plant suits the situation – ferns will get frazzled on a sunny window sill but sempervivums will love the sun.
- Group different sizes, shapes and textures of plants together for a stunning display. Try spiky aloe vera against a mound of mind-your-own-business, contrasted with trailing ivy, to enhance each plant.
- Add height to the display for visual interest. There are lots of ways to do this, from tall urn style pots (fill the bottom with gravel or polystyrene) to standing containers on a pile of books or an upturned teacup to raise them up.
- Colour co-ordinate pots to enable the plants to take centre stage. This method is also much more restful on the eye. Shades of white and grey are the simplest and most effective combination.
- Accept that some plants need more nurturing and might be early casualties if you are new to house plants. Sempervivum, spider plants and ivies are hard to kill and are great for novices. They make for simple to maintain, but interesting, displays.

0116 298 6393, miafleur.com

Aged brass plant pot, £15.95, MiaFleur

Round plant pot, £45, miafleur.com

INDUSTRY INSIGHT



Jacqui Brooks runs her eclectic online interiors boutique MiaFleur with her daughters, Hollie and Amelia in Leicester. Her motto is 'life's too short to be minimalist'.

I see my houseplants as an ever-changing display (rather like cut flowers) and as they grow they need to be rearranged. Group several small ones together with a couple of taller architectural ones for extra impact. At the moment my favourites are an aloe vera with its tall spikes surrounded by trailing ivy and a Boston fern for its lush fronds. Keep to shades of green and rely on texture and shape for interest, rather than flowering plants, for a cohesive display. An economical way to bulk up your collection is to buy some faux plants. We have a new range launching in May and they're handy for spots where it is hard to grow a real plant. I recommend *The House Gardener* by Isabelle Palmer and *The Plant Recipe Book* by Baylor Chapman.

Online Inspiration

We've compiled our most inspirational house plant ideas and handy hints in one place, so head to **pinterest.com/periodideas** to see what you think.


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Site to see

If you enjoy trying new things, learning new skills and meeting new people, check out the range of fantastic courses available at West Dean. The College offers an exciting programme for fans of gardening, including a talk on how to boost your vegetable patch by Mark Diacono and Lia Leenderz, on 6th June. For more details, visit **westdean.org.uk/gardens**

Cortardo round table and set of two chairs in blue, £99, all Marks & Spencer. **0333 014 8000, marksandspencer.com**



Bloom of the month ROSE

There's more to this popular flower than love and romance...

We all know the romantic connotations of roses, but each colour actually represents something different, such as yellow, which symbolises friendship and caring.

Roses can be grown as flowering shrubs or trained to climb trellises or walls, and their beauty and sweet fragrance has been revered for centuries. The rose is England's national flower, and dates from the reign of Henry VII. He introduced the Tudor rose as a symbol of unity after the bitter civil wars of the 15th century. For the best results, place your roses in a sunny spot, in moist, well-drained soil that is rich in organic matter. Make sure you water your roses well after planting, and regularly prune plants and remove faded blooms (known as 'deadheading') to ensure they grow to their full potential.

The great outdoors

Enjoying a daily dose of fresh air really can do us the world of good

According to a study published in the Environmental Science & Technology journal, just five minutes of low-impact exercise, such as walking or gardening, in a green space is enough to significantly lift your mood. As well as helping your mind, spending time outside is also great for your body. The National Osteoporosis Society advises that you should try to get ten minutes of sun exposure to bare skin once or twice a day, as sunlight is the best source of vitamin D, which promotes calcium absorption from our food – essential for bone health.

Seasonal shopping Garden Journal

The latest news, inspirational ideas and expert advice for your great outdoors

GROW TIME

The highly successful contemporary garden fair, GROW London, returns from 19th–21st June. Exhibitors will showcase the very best of what's available in the world of gardens and horticulture, offering a selection of contemporary and classic garden furniture, rare and hard-to-find plants from the country's best nurseries, and a range of stylish pots, planters, accessories and tools. Acclaimed designer, Cleve West, will be headlining the exciting talks programme, and *Period Ideas* columnist Sarah Raven will also be dispensing her priceless wisdom. As well as this, visitors can enjoy free workshops and activities, aimed at both adults and children. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit **growlondon.com**



Boot up

Make sure you enjoy outdoor adventures this summer without soggy feet by paying The Welly Shop a visit. It specialises in top-quality wellington boots from leading brands, including Hunter, Aigle and Le Chameau. From practical foldable options, to designer boots that make a style statement, there's a pair of wellies to suit every taste and occasion. To get a fantastic 10% off your next purchase, head to **thewellyshop.com** and enter discount code **WQAV710** at the checkout. Offer expires at the end of May.

RETAIL THERAPY

Stay organised in the garden with these useful outdoor accessories



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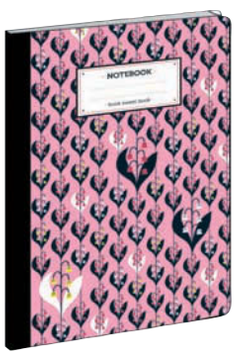
TOOL UP
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LEAVE A MARK
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STRING ALONG
You can never have enough gardening twine, so keep yours neat in a cute crate, from £2.50 per ball of twine, Nutscene. **01307 468 589, nutscene.com**



WRITE WAY
Note down your gardening plans in a pretty jotter, £11.25, Berry Red. **01432 274 805, berryred.co.uk**

BRANCHING *Out*

Acting editor of Grow Your Own magazine, Claire Holmes, reveals how to successfully take chard from your plot to your plate



CLAIRE HOLMES **is the acting editor of *Grow Your Own*. For more growing tips and ideas, pick up the next issue, on sale 1st May.**

EXPERT ADVICE



"June is an exciting time for growers. There are signs of healthy, vigorous growth springing up across the plot and harvests are starting to roll in. While the main jobs for this month will involve planting out indoor-sown crops and keeping an eye out for pests and diseases, there's still plenty of sowing that can be done. Oriental veg such as pak choi and broccoli raab are great options for those who want to try something a little different, and quick-maturing crops such as baby turnips, radishes and cut-and-come-again salads should also be sown continually throughout the summer.

Another vegetable which can be started this month is chard. This wonderful leafy crop not only tastes delicious, but its colourful stems and crumpled 'elephant-ear' leaves also look fantastic growing in your garden. Sowing can take place between April and July and should be done directly into finely-prepared, well-drained soil, which has already been watered. Distribute seeds finely in your soil, spacing rows 40cm apart. Once seedlings have appeared and are growing strongly, thin your plants so that they are 15cm apart. Don't just throw away the excess though – these young leaves can be enjoyed as tasty microgreens scattered over salads. Water steadily as they grow and when harvest time comes around, pick the leaves regularly – you'll notice that your plants will continue to produce new growth throughout the season."

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GARDEN GOSSIP

Sarah Raven

The queen bee of the British gardening scene reveals her planting advice for the month and shares a fantastic offer with you

Now that the frosts are over, it's our dahlia planting moment. Dahlias are tender tubers, and if you plant them out before the risk of cold spells has passed they can suffer and die, so it's best to wait until June.

We devote more and more room to dahlias at Perch Hill. In a good year, they'll flower from late June to early December, particularly in a sheltered spot. Cosmos 'Purity' out-does dahlias in terms of buckets produced per square metre, but we leave our dahlias in the ground here and treat them as a perennial plant, and they require very little work from one year to the next.

They come in all shapes and sizes and are available in some beautiful colours. My three current favourites are 'Purple Flame', 'Waltzing Mathilda' and 'Soulman', which look brilliant growing in the garden together or picked and arranged in a vase. 'Happy Halloween', a new, untamed variety I found in a trial field in Holland, is another cracker, in a dazzling orange hue. I've only had it in the garden for three years, but it always flowers earliest and for the longest time. It is intensely bright and excellent mixed with the equally new and unusual anemone-flowered dahlia 'Blue Bayou'. I love these growing together and, planted out now, they'll be in flower in about six weeks, and will continue to bloom all the way until November.

Dahlias thrive in most sunny situations and do best in fertile soil, with plenty of moisture and good drainage. To plant them, dig a hole at least 30cm square and 30cm deep for each one, spacing them 75cm apart (although this may change depending on the expected final size of the variety you've chosen). Cover the base of the hole with compost or manure and give it a good dousing with a full watering can, then plant the dahlia. Add grit to the planting hole if your garden is on heavy clay soil. You will need a stout stake to support each plant and it is a good idea to knock this in first and then place the plant by its side. After about a week in the ground, scatter a couple of trowelfuls of fish, blood and bone fertiliser around the clump and give them another good soaking.

Dahlias grow very quickly once they get going and can easily break off at the base in windy or rainy conditions, so make sure they are securely staked and tie them every couple of weeks. Then all you need to do is pick, pick, pick! Don't dead-head, live-head and bring in bunches to decorate your home. Dahlias will flower all the longer and harder for your harvest.

Sarah Raven has been running cooking, flower arranging, growing and gardening classes at her East Sussex farm since 1999, and has presented on BBC Gardeners World. She also has her own website, where you can purchase flowers, seeds, kits and view a full list of courses, ***sarahraven.com***

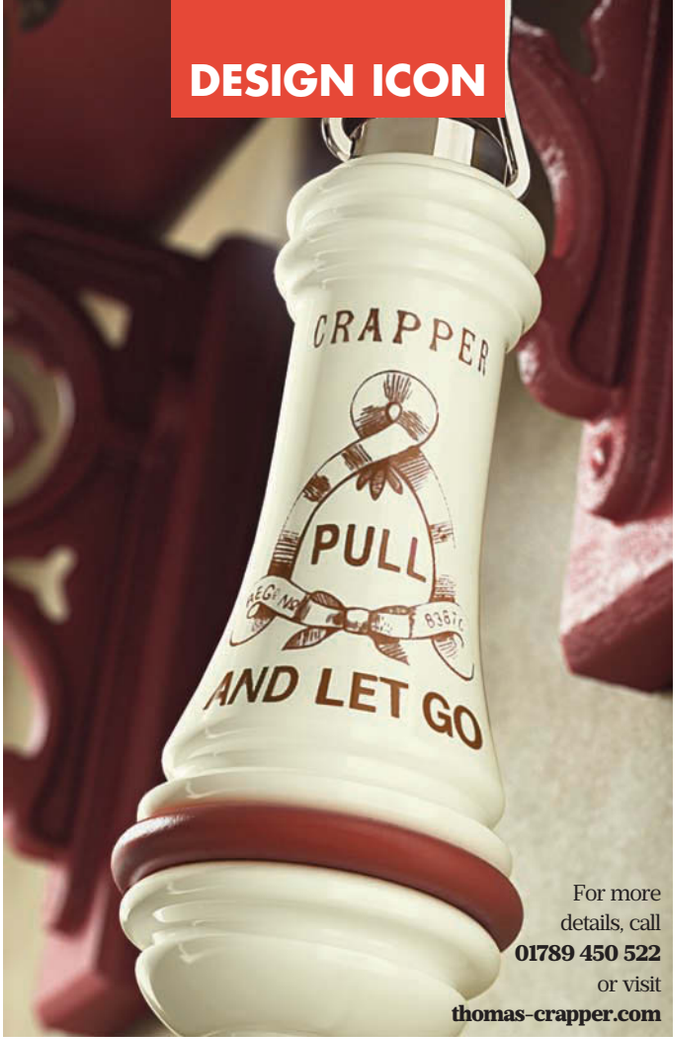
Reader offer

Period Ideas readers can get free P&P across all of Sarah's fantastic products. Simply visit **sarahraven.com** and enter offer code **PD15SUM** at the basket. Offer ends 31st August 2015. Offer is only valid online and cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. For full terms and conditions, visit **sarahraven.com/terms-and-conditions**



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THOMAS CRAPPER & CO.

Period Ideas celebrates the best in British interiors

There's no better place to retreat after a long day than your bathroom, which offers peace, cleanliness and relaxation. But centuries ago, bathtubs, working toilets, showers and basins were hard to come by, with the exception of homes owned by the very wealthy. Thankfully, Thomas Crapper revolutionised bathroom fittings and successfully championed sanitary products in a very sceptical and divided world, founding the prestigious bathroom manufacturer, Thomas Crapper & Co.

Born to humble beginnings in Yorkshire in 1836, Thomas travelled south to London aged 14, where he was apprenticed to a Master Plumber in Chelsea. He served this apprenticeship well and after years of working as a journeyman, he set up his own service as a plumber in Robert Street, Chelsea, in 1861. He devoted himself to innovation in the plumbing industry and, despite the poor sanitary conditions of 19th century London, relentlessly promoted sanitaryware – advocating the water-waste-preventing cistern syphon in particular. To attract attention to his products, Thomas created a controversial display which was quite the sensation at the time. He presented his goods, including china WC bowls, in large plate glass windows at the Marlborough Road Works, astounding many passers-by. Thomas was one of the first people to display these seemingly personal items so publicly and, unbeknown to him, he had in fact pioneered the first bathroom showroom.



Today, Thomas Crapper & Co. keeps this rich heritage at the forefront of its identity, and current owners, Simon Kirby and Warrick Knott, have a strong passion for the great history of this famous firm. Simon, a bathroom industry historian and a collector of outdated loos, basins, taps and baths, makes sure the values of Thomas Crapper remain alive by working with skilled and enthusiastic specialists. The pair ensure that antiques are available for customers who wish to experience the innovations of the founder himself, while exact replicas of the sanitaryware from a century ago are produced here in Great Britain using original techniques, the majority of which are done by hand. For a real taste of the past, visit the private museum of antique bathroom goods, including Crapper items, various manufacturers' catalogues and Thomas Crapper's leather-bound account and minute books, at the company's base in Warwickshire.

If you want to furnish your bathroom with truly authentic reproductions, contact Thomas Crapper & Co., established in 1861, for a huge collection of Victorian and Edwardian sanitaryware.

Thomas devoted himself to innovation in the plumbing industry and relentlessly promoted sanitaryware in 19th century London



AT HOME WITH...

Mary Claire Boyd



The director of Olympia International Art & Antiques Fair tells us how history influences her interiors

Although homewares may appear to be all about the new, interior designers regularly rely on the past to influence future designs. Thankfully, we can enjoy the treasures of previous eras without a time machine, by visiting Olympia International Art & Antiques Fair.

Taking place between 18th–28th June in the heart of London, this year's event will bring together 170 of the world's leading specialist dealers, who will be showcasing a wide choice of high-quality and fully-vetted art, antiques, furniture and collectors' pieces. Items for sale span over 35 different categories of art and antiques, including carpets and rugs, ceramics, furniture, sculptures and much more. Whether you've got a budget of £100 or £1 million, you're sure to find something to appeal to your tastes among the eclectic range of pieces.

My favourite room is...
our drawing room – for its view, its size, but mainly for its contents. It contains a wonderful assortment of antiques, artwork, comfortable seating, a log fire, and all sorts of quirky objects from our travels.

The thing I like best about my house is...
its light and space. We are lucky enough to live in a 500-year-old listed building, with a delightful view of rural Dorset, and its personality more than compensates for its shortcomings, such as the rather large heating and maintenance bills!

When I'm at home I enjoy...
relaxing and being outside, either enjoying the local countryside or pottering around in the garden pretending I know the difference between plants and weeds.

The place I love most in Britain is...
the western isles of Scotland, a beautifully varied and special part of Britain. Its remoteness and the solitude it provides is a great contrast to the hustle and bustle of London.

When I'm decorating a room I always...
make the mistake of trying to over-furnish it. It's always tempting to use a piece simply because you have it, regardless of whether it is appropriate for the space.

> I'm lucky enough to work in a world that is filled with beautiful and historical objects

The worst design disaster I've ever had was....
tiling all the walls in an attic bathroom with orange and white tiles, just because they were a bargain!

My inspiration comes from...
I'm lucky enough to work in a world that is filled with not only beautiful and historical objects, but with dealers who know exactly how to make them work in a room, and I draw a lot of inspiration from them.

My biggest style influence is...
the Olympia Fairs. You can't help but be influenced by the enormous variety of pieces and the ways in which they are displayed. There are always surprising objects to see, and the feel of each show varies every time, depending upon the focus of the exhibitors.

The current interiors trend I love most is...
the use of spectacular antique pieces in a room furnished with otherwise contemporary content; the strong contrast is striking.

I think the next interiors trend will be...
a return to favour of the much maligned and ludicrously undervalued brown furniture. Its quality, craftsmanship and sheer value for money makes its resurgence inevitable and long overdue.

The best advice I ever had was...
to live for the moment and to make the most of every day, come rain or shine.

For tickets and more information about the next Olympia Art & Antiques Fair, visit **olympia-art-antiques.com**

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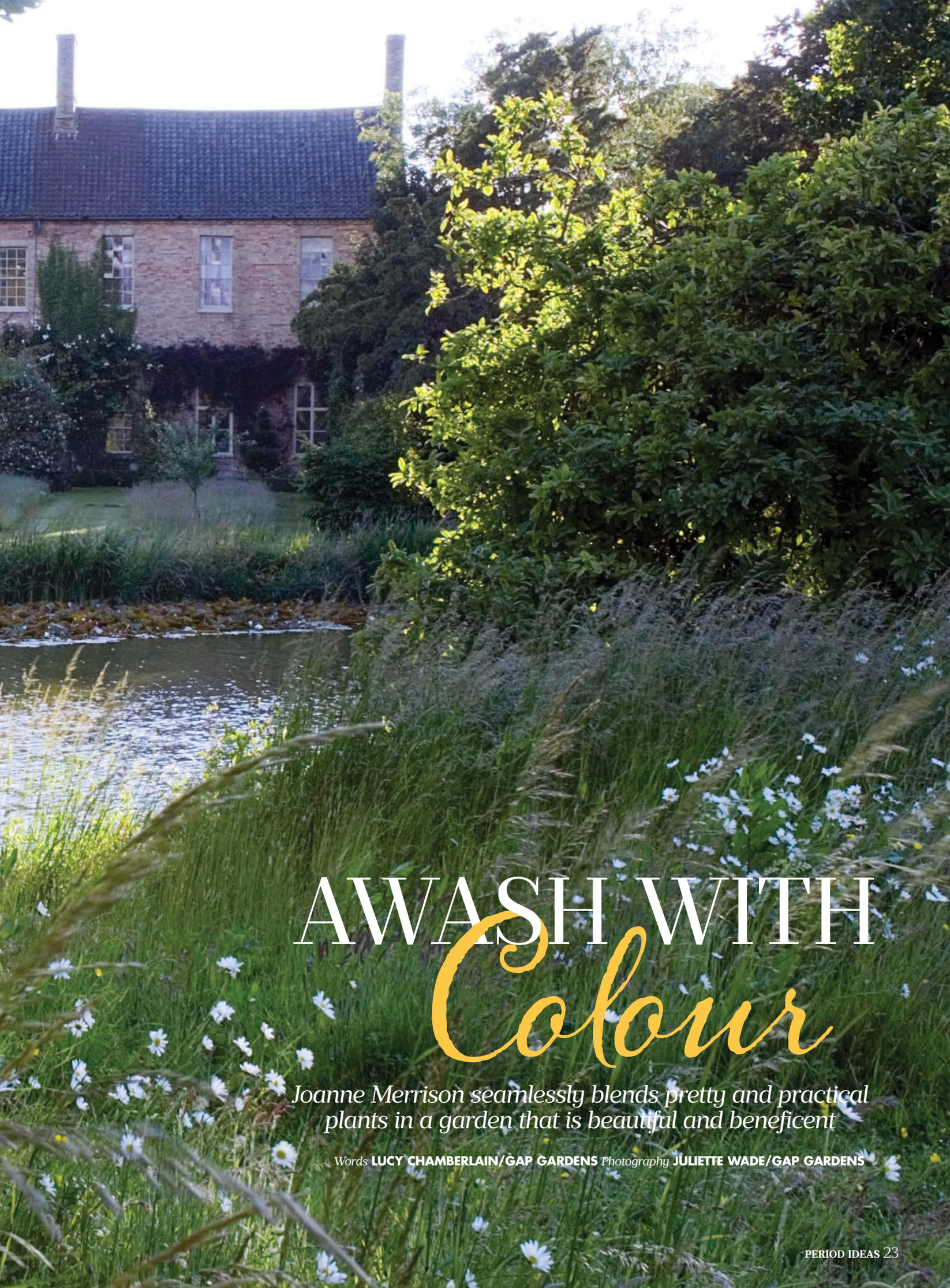






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AWASH WITH *Colour*

Joanne Merrison seamlessly blends pretty and practical plants in a garden that is beautiful and beneficent

Words **LUCY CHAMBERLAIN/GAP GARDENS** *Photography* **JULIETTE WADE/GAP GARDENS**





One word that could never be used to describe Dr Joanne Merrison's approach to gardening is timid. While many of us would feel daunted by the mere thought of taking on an 80-acre site, containing a historic house, car park and vast lawns, she embraced the challenge. Along with three part-time gardeners, Joanne and her husband Robert, an art dealer, have worked tirelessly over the past twelve years to create an outdoor space that mirrors the grand, elegant architecture of Narborough Hall, in Norfolk, which dates back to 1587.

PLENTIFUL PRODUCE

Joanne, who studied at the University of Sussex and went on to teach English Literature and Romantic Poetry at Cambridge, is by no means a stranger to gardening. She comes from a farming family and won gold at the Sandringham Flower Show for her kitchen garden-style design in 2008. When it came to Narborough, a crucial job was the restoration of the dilapidated greenhouse in the walled garden, which had been untouched for over twenty years. Reviving this broken down building turned out to be a blessing, as it allowed Joanne to propagate thousands of seedlings and cuttings to be used in the grounds. As well as this, the kitchen garden was fully restocked, providing an abundance of useful and edible goods.

This was one of the key considerations in Joanne's planting plans – everything in the garden has to have a use, whether edible, medicinal or simply for display. She started by stocking a lone fruit cage, discovered in the old greenhouse, with currants, gooseberries and rosehips. Local heritage apple varieties were then sourced by head gardener, Bob Lever. Captain Palmer, Lynne's Pippin, Red Ellison and St. Magdalen now grace the garden's inner walls. These have been planted on vigorous rootstocks to produce large, traditional orchard-style trees. Original box hedging has been renovated and joined by more and one area, inspired by the Victorian poem 'Pied Beauty' by Gerard Manley Hopkins, contains flecked and speckled foxgloves, fritillaries, hellebores and the gloriously scented rosa mundi.

NATURAL HAVEN

While some areas just needed a spot of tweaking, the grounds also provided Joanne with a completely blank canvas in the form of a south-facing gravel car park. Wanting to work with the shallow soil and landscape, she scratched through the gravel to sow seeds of native species such as ox-eye daisies,

Previous page The impressive property boasts a lake complete with an island, a Gothic boathouse and a log cabin, which ties in perfectly with the meandering River Nar, which runs through its grounds.



Everything in the garden has to have a use, whether edible, medicinal or simply for display









Right With willow-weaving workshops, a café selling home-made food, art exhibits and children's walks, it's clear that Joanna has abundant enthusiasm to continually take the garden forward into the future.

Above far right The purple border contains roses 'William Shakespeare' and 'Charles de Mills' alongside alliums and purple fennel.

ragged robin, viper's bugloss and campion. This wild gravel garden has proved a huge success among the wildlife world, with clouds of bees and butterflies busily foraging from bloom to bloom on warm, sunny days. In fact, the whole site is a rich wildlife haven, with sightings of water voles and brown trout ensuring that it is a site of special scientific interest.

TRUE COLOURS

The stand-out features of the garden are the glorious, colour-themed borders. Joanne admits that she takes her inspiration not from what flowers are in fashion, but from names and hues that personally resonate with her. For example, her pastel border came into being thanks to her daughters' fascination with candy-pink clothing and princesses. It contains traditional plants such as dianthus, roses, hollyhocks, lupins and froths of Alchemilla mollis, which results in a beautifully informal yet streamlined planting scheme. On the opposite end of the colour spectrum, the delicious-sounding plum and chocolate border contains fruit and edible flowers such as black hollyhocks, sultry roses, dusky dahlias, crab apples, blackcurrants and grapes.

Joanne's latest development is the bridal garden, which is filled with white-flowered plants. This graceful scheme and the stunning views across the parkland to the local church have made Narborough Hall a popular wedding venue. It also offers willow-weaving workshops, a café selling home-produced food, art exhibits and children's walks, clearly demonstrating Joanne's abundant enthusiasm to continually take the garden forward into the future.

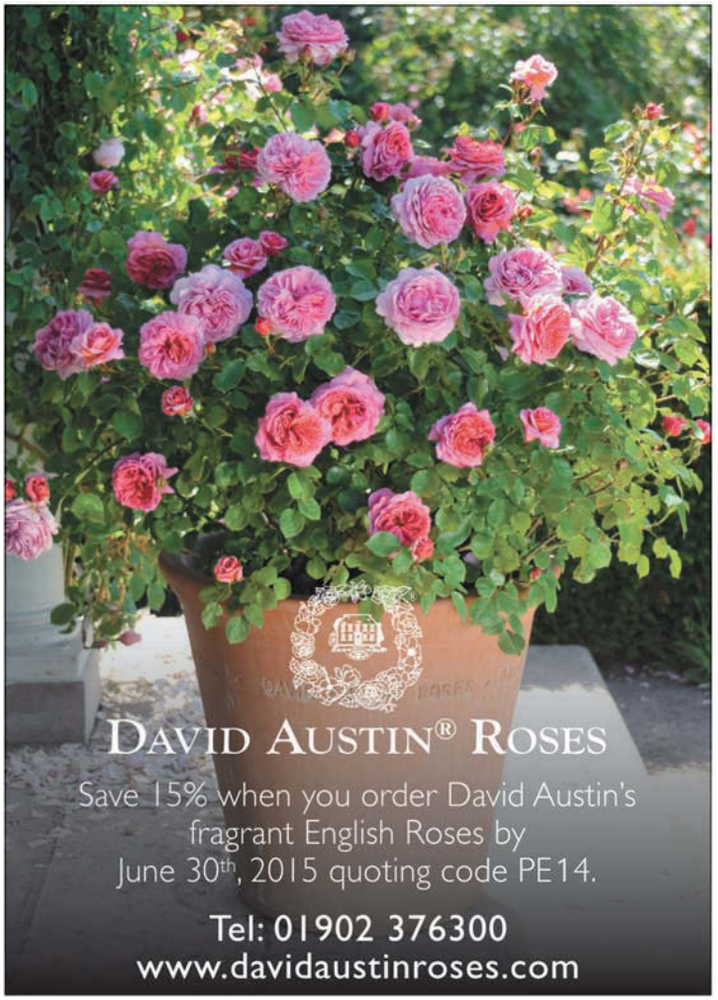
For more information or to arrange a visit to Narborough Hall and its stunning gardens, call **01760 338 827** or visit **narboroughhallgardens.com**

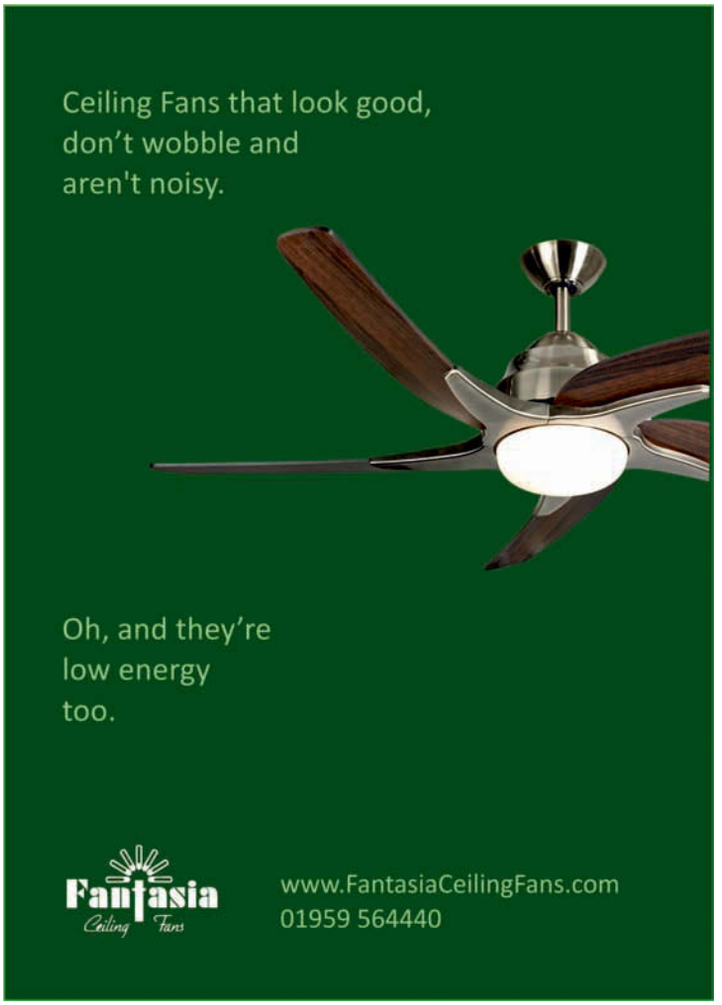









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Building a DREAM

This month we meet the architectural genius behind Antique Buildings



If you're looking for a beautiful oak floor, an old oak beam, some ancient handmade bricks, a barn frame or a complete new house, then put Antique Buildings in Surrey, just ten miles south of Guildford, at the top of your list. The company is run by Peter Barker, who has over 40 years' experience in the reclamation industry.

"One of the great pleasures of building or renovating a period home is the opportunity it gives you to go to salvage yards and look at wonderful old pieces which will provide individuality and breathe life into your project," he says. "If you're travelling some distance to a yard, you want to be confident that it will have exactly what you want in stock. That's what makes Antique Buildings unique. Our yard boasts the country's largest and most comprehensive stock of reclaimed oak timbers, wide floorboards, handmade bricks, roof tiles, paving materials and dismantled barn frames ready for re-erection."

HEARTS OF OAK

Peter's architectural consultancy firm specialises exclusively in ancient oak framed buildings and has won countless awards for saving and converting redundant barns, extending listed houses and designing and creating new homes using reclaimed materials. Little wonder that he knows exactly what people are looking for when they visit his yard.

"My company's architectural work always requires the very best in reclaimed materials so we have sourced the finest items available," he explains. "We've also invested a lot of time in the website so that people can see at a glance what's on offer. We show pictures of the materials we have for sale and detailed sketch illustrations and photographs of complete building frames which we have carefully dismantled for re-erection. We have also put together a dedicated question and answer section, that customers have said they've found to be especially useful."

Peter and his team pride themselves on the high quality of the architectural and design advice that they offer their customers and love to share their knowledge. If you need inspiration, you can look at the 'Completed Projects' section on site that shows how the company's various reclaimed materials might be used. If you have ever wondered if you could lay wide oak floorboards over underfloor heating, then you'll be pleased to see them in situ in one of Peter's re-erected barns, proving how stable this stunning material can be.

And if you're considering reinstating or building an inglenook fireplace in your home, there are three different working fireplaces in





different buildings to show you exactly what can be done with beautiful antique bricks and bressummer beams.

"We are happy to provide sketches for people of the sort of designs they might like," Peter explains. "Then we can select exactly the right components and lay them out for approval. Clients are often very pleasantly surprised at how reasonable it can be to create a stunning effect that will simply make their house a home."

Not only is using reclaimed materials a much more environmentally friendly option; reclaimed beams, bricks and roof tiles look instantly comfortable and 'right' – an effect which is almost impossible to achieve with new materials. A look at the 'Completed Projects' section of the Antique Buildings web site will perfectly demonstrate this basic truth.

Find the perfect match for your property

Click on **antiquebuildings.com** for more details and directions or call **01483 200 477**.
The reclamation yard is open Monday to Friday 8.30am to 4pm and on Saturday by appointment.



Above The Chilterns are home to some delightful traditional homes like Wisteria Cottage. The garden is great for enjoying long summer days outside.

CHILTERN LIVING

TIMELESS

How Tracey and Andrew Rosser created a rustic retreat to





Tracey and Andy savour the view from the porch as their cottage garden blooms with foxgloves and pretty flowers.

TREASURE

share with their family and four-legged friends in Oxfordshire

Feature **PAUL FREEMAN/CHILLI MEDIA.** *Photography* **ASHLEY MORRISON/CHILLI MEDIA** *Styling* **MARIE MCMILLEN/ CHILLI MEDIA**



It's not just the house I love, it's everything. It's the people around, it's the countryside. The house is just part of it.

Above Classic fine furniture sets the tone in the Rossers' dining room. The natural colours in the fabric tone in with the golden flagstones, timber beams and the French table linen.

Tracey Rosser found her new home, Wisteria Cottage, by chance, when she became lost in a tangle of unnamed roads in a quiet corner of the Chiltern Hills to the east of Henley-on-Thames. "At the time, we were looking at renting not buying, but when we found the cottage we decided to buy as it was a really special place."

The three-bedroomed cottage is set in a large garden with wide views over open fields that slope down towards an ancient road called 'the judges ride', which is said to be where the judge travelled on his way to try suspected highwaymen.

Tracey, who works in veterinary pharmaceuticals, wanted to live in the country but her husband, Andy, was used to living closer to town and initially he felt the property might be a bit isolated. Any worries about being out on a limb were soon put to rest when the couple discovered that there was a thriving and welcoming community close to the house. "People here are very open and helpful," observes Tracey, "And the other great thing about living here is that I can stable my horse, George, only a short walk up the road, making this a great base for riding."

LIVING THE DREAM

Andy, who runs his own blast cleaning business, says, "The cottage was a great opportunity to do something I have wanted to do for quite a while. In my work I'm often cleaning up new green oak beamed buildings, or perhaps restoring even older buildings where the beams are blackened with age or paint. I've seen the way a property can be brought back to its former glory, and I wanted to live in one myself. Now I just love the place. The thing I like the most is the warmth of the natural wood and the lightness."

When the Rossers first saw the property it needed a lot of improvement, but thankfully no major structural work was required. Soon it would become a nurturing home for Andy and Tracey, and their son, Tommy, and Digit, the ginger tabby, as well as numerous chickens. "The master bedroom ceiling





Above The cosy living room is just the place for curling up with a book and a long cool drink on a Sunday afternoon.







Left Try a hunting scene on a kitchen splashback for a great take on country style, like Tracey, Subtle decorations add charm to the scheme without overwhelming it.



The kitchen had a lot of unrealised potential. I persuaded Andy to keep the pantry for its extra storage.



was probably the biggest job. It was sagging so badly that it came down to head height, so we needed to give the fabric of the building some TLC," says Tracey. Today the old chimney breast has a charming curve reminiscent of the roof of an oast house and the room is a cosy and romantic space. The classic soft bedspread is by Peacock Blue and the striped cushions are from Laura Ashley, whilst a charming vintage suitcase came from France.

STYLE CHALLENGE

"The style of the house was rather twee when we bought it, full of lace and doilies," says Tracey. "We wanted to keep it feeling like a country cottage but update it so it fitted our style better. The kitchen had a lot of unrealised potential, but I persuaded Andy not to knock down a wall and get rid of the pantry, as old-fashioned storage is good to have. We did have a slight decorating disaster, though, as Andy measured up the kitchen doors precisely, but then he screwed all the handles on wrong, so they all ended up off-centre." Today the kitchen is organised around an electric Aga which allows energy efficient running in every season. In summer it is possible to switch on only the small oven, saving energy. A hand painted tile mural enhances the English country look.



Every quirk and period detail adds to the charm of the Rossers' home, which started life as a row of farm workers' cottages in the 17th century. The couple put a lot of effort into restoring the fireplace in their sitting room. Originally it had two small rough brick walls built inside and needed sandblasting to return it to a clean state. Once this focal point was in a good condition, Tracey enjoyed shopping for suitable decorations. The chicken sculpture came from a local gallery in Henley and the checked and dotty throws and lamp are by Freckles and Bird. The dining room is the perfect place for fine French linen, a holiday purchase which is practical and easy on the eye. Underfoot, the golden flagstones evoke a rich sense of history, as does the Stanley stove in the hallway.

Tracey loves the mature English country garden that came along with the house. "We thought it might need a bit of tidying up, but it turned out to be beautiful once we saw it come to life with the digitalis and hollyhocks in the spring and summer," she smiles.

While in some ways this is a very traditional house, Tracey and Andy have made it a comfortable contemporary home, but above all, the unique house is only part of what makes it so special for them. "It's not just the house, it's everything, it's the people around, it's the countryside. The house is just part of it."





Period Ideas says

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Multiyork offers you the chance to determine a style that perfectly suits your home

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For the chance to win this amazing prize, turn to page 138 or head to periodideas.com and answer the following question:

Q Which high-street brand has Multiyork recently collaborated with?

A Laura Ashley
B Jigsaw
C Monsoon

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CLOSING DATE: 12th June 2015

COTTAGE MAKEOVER

HOME *Sweet* HOME

Monica Borg and Simon Michie transformed a quaint Essex cottage into a Swedish-inspired paradise

Words **PAT GARRATT/CHILLI MEDIA** *Photography* **DAVID GILES/CHILLI MEDIA**

On the outskirts of Great Dunmow, in Essex, stands Monica Borg and Simon Michie's charming cottage. Its exterior boasts quaint windows and delicate greenery, giving it a quintessential countryside feel, but inside lies an unmistakably Swedish surprise. Having relocated to the UK from Sweden, Monica refurbished the cottage with her heritage in mind, while exploring her flair for interior design. This combination of hard work, patience and an eye for aesthetics yielded stunning and stylish results.

TIGHT SQUEEZE

Monica's fresh start began many years ago, when she arrived in the UK with her four year old son, Daniel, following her divorce. She began working as an au pair, but didn't discover Great Dunmow until later on, when she was training to be a florist. A row of early 19th century farm labourer's cottages in the area where she worked caught her eye and, remarkably, one of them was for sale. Although the interiors were fairly compact, there was a large garden to provide extra space, which suited Monica and her son perfectly.

"The house was dark and had been partially extended at the rear, so the layout was very awkward," remembers Monica. "We had to go through a bedroom to reach the bathroom. There was so little space downstairs that we had to eat while sitting under the stairs!" This cramped lifestyle encouraged Monica to make the cottage more functional and in keeping with modern family life. She decided to take on some of the more dated features first, demolishing an old fireplace and laying sisal flooring to create a contemporary look. She even sacrificed her old style to accommodate the proportions of this new property. "All of my London furniture had to be sold because it was too big for the cottage," she recalls. Thankfully, this loss wasn't detrimental to Monica's determination – she continued to strive for a practical scheme in her home, which was visually appealing too. Inspired by classic Gustavian style and artist Carl Larsson's cosy, idealised paintings of interiors, Monica wanted to translate this look in her own home. As a small tribute to him, she featured one of the artist's best-known paintings in the kitchen, and began redecorating the cottage with a feel that evoked warmth and comfortability.

TEAM WORK

Thankfully, Monica didn't have to tackle the entire cottage alone, as Simon, who rented the cottage next door, was eager to get involved in the project and share the hefty workload. "He heard me chipping away at the Artex on the wall late at night, but never complained," tells Monica. They stayed in touch when Simon returned to Cambridge to live, but a year later, the cottage next door appeared on the market and it was too good an opportunity to miss. Simon bought it, as well as



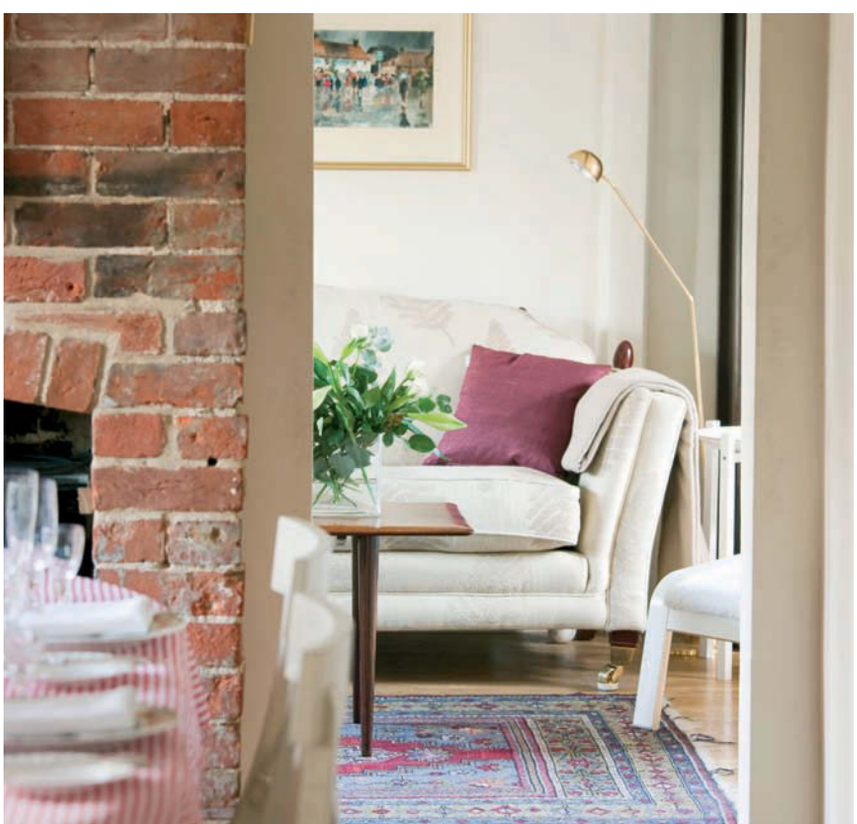
Below Monica's family furniture added real character to her rooms. She placed her great uncle's 1960s rosewood coffee table in the living room, alongside the rug her mother brought back from Turkey.





Merging these three properties was no easy task for Simon and Monica, who took on most of the work themselves









5 SHORTCUTS TO SWEDISH STYLE

- Stick to neutral shades and cool tones for a chic and subtle feel.
- Shake up a simple scheme with bursts of bright colours in the form of statement furniture and accessories.
- For an authentic and rustic look, leave natural textures exposed and roughly sand painted furniture to create a stylish shabby-chic effect.
- A decorative rug is perfect for bringing a splash of colour to a scheme, without overwhelming the room.
- Replicate Monica's minimalist look with the variety of stunning home accessories at the **scandinavianshop.co.uk**



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Left In keeping with her love of all things Swedish, Monica furnished her dining room with gentle white tones and natural textures for a simple look, interspersed with red and striped accessories.

the third cottage in the row shortly afterwards, so the couple could forge ahead with their dream home.

But merging these three properties wasn't an easy task, particularly as Simon and Monica took on the majority of the work themselves. "There's nothing we didn't do," says Monica. "Plumbing, electrics, much of the building work – we've tried it all!" They even managed to fit the work around their time consuming jobs – Simon's IT career and Monica's shop, Delicious Home, which sells New England and Scandinavian-style accessories. This hard work and careful budgeting eventually paid off, resulting in a bright, four-bedroomed home, which now includes a new kitchen and bathroom.

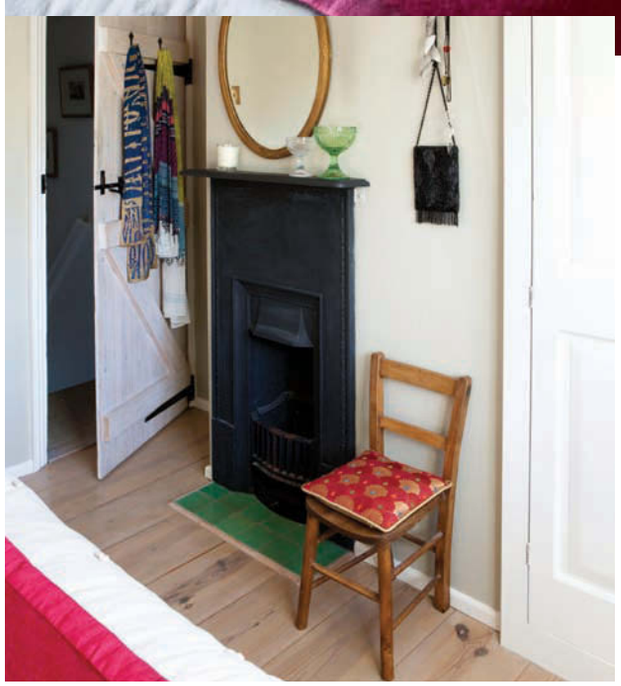
HOMELY TOUCH

For Monica, this home was also a chance to showcase her design talents and insight into Swedish interiors. "We like to keep colours light in Sweden, due to the long, dark winters," Monica explains, which was a look she replicated in the cottage. She decorated in a palette of soft greys and off-whites, with stripped wooden floors and pale painted furniture, contrasted with red gingham accessories for a splash of colour. Her choice of plain painted walls, scrubbed brick and pale wooden floors creates a natural simplicity, which suits the style of this old cottage, while her cream-painted armoire, bright rugs and antique pieces add interest and excitement to the scheme.

There's a sentimental element running throughout Monica's interiors, and she admits to taking inspiration from her childhood when choosing the décor. "This place reminds me of my grandmother's country cottage near Uppsala, which had very low ceilings, small rooms and a traditional red and white colour scheme – it was a really homely place," she says. To replicate this cosy feel, Monica searched local bric-a-brac shops for furniture, some of which she painted, while other items are











left to glow with the original patina of old wood, creating an authentic and comforting atmosphere.

This combined row of cottages has morphed into a stunning property, decorated in classic Swedish style, and is home to the now married Monica and Simon, who have a son of their own, James. Despite years of renovating work which was difficult at times, Monica and Simon made their vision a reality, and gave a set of old workers' cottages a new lease of life.

INSTANT EXPERT

Choosing a minimalist scheme in your home is perfect for achieving this classic Swedish look.

In terms of colour, use subtle and neutral tones such as whites, creams and greys to create a cool and calm ambience. Plus, the simple elegance of these shades means it won't look outdated in years to come. Make the most of natural light and ensure you don't overcrowd areas which seem plain, as this will bring a clean and fresh feel to your décor. Add pops of colour in reds and yellows, and use traditional patterns, such as gingham, stripes and checks to break up the theme with some interesting detail.

Above Pale pink and gentle grey are a great colour combination, while statement lighting illuminates this cosy area. The couple had enough space to sacrifice a small bedroom and turn it into a dressing room.



The cottage gave Monica a chance to showcase her design talents and insight into Swedish interiors



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How to enter

For the chance to win these amazing prizes, turn to page 138 or head to **periodideas.com**
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MIDCENTURY MAGIC

Magpie's NEST

Chris Phillips and Sean Keyes's substantial collection of 1950s and 1960s pieces, gives their home its distinctive style

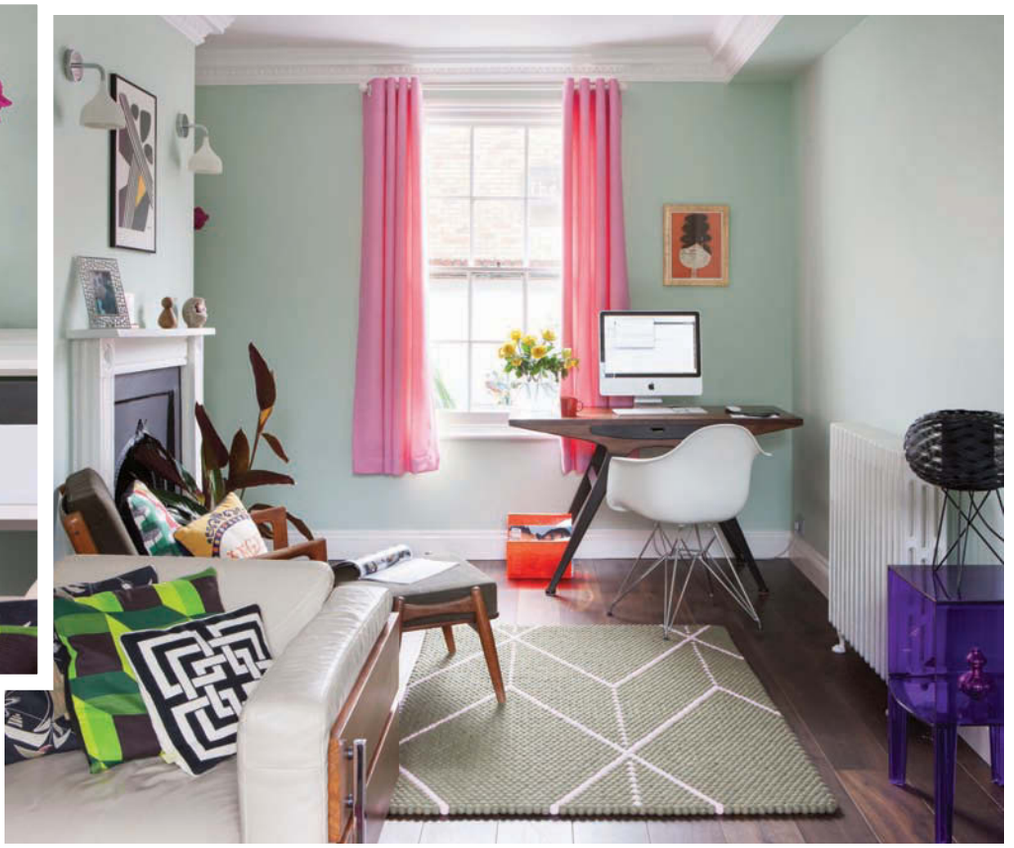
Words/styling **RENÉE GREEN/CHILLI MEDIA** *Photography* **DAVID GILES/CHILLI MEDIA**











Above The couple replaced the old pale laminate flooring with new dark wood. The white leather Day Forum armchair, is from Habitat. The 1960s London Scenes coffee table is by John Piper.

'Tacky', 'kitsch', and 'tat' are not words which anyone would necessarily want to be associated with their home. Yet these are the key words Chris Phillips' uses when buying items online for the terraced Dalston house he shares with partner, Sean Keyes. The collection has steadily grown over the past ten years, since the couple arrived with little furniture and furnishings – choosing instead to start with a blank space.

"The house seemed very empty for the first few months. We wanted to live here and get used to the space before doing any major work or investing in big purchases," explains Chris, a music lawyer and author. "The house had recently been painted in neutral colours but both the kitchen and bathroom were in poor condition. The bathroom had lots of panelling and shelving and was really very Laura Ashley, which wasn't our style at all. The kitchen also had dark panelled units, some of which had fallen off, and a black formica worktop," he adds.

PROFESSIONAL HELP

After a few DIY paint jobs, the couple decided it was time to call in the experts for peace of mind. While out walking Sidney, their bichon frise, they stopped outside Amberth, a local interiors studio; this became the start of a good relationship as the company has since tended to most of the house's needs, starting with the kitchen.

"They must have been very frustrated with us, but certainly didn't show it – we kept coming in to discuss our projects and it took six months from our initial meeting to sign



off on the new kitchen," Chris says. "We were very indecisive – not about the design but more about pushing the button and committing to the work as it was our first large scale project and we'd had a bad experience in the past with dodgy builder," he adds.

Chris and Sean, a financial director for an interior design company, contributed plenty of ideas and were greatly influenced by ideas spotted on their travels. While Chris was writing his book, the couple rented a house in Palm Springs. They fell in love with its mid-century architecture, particularly a marbled stone kitchen wall that they have now replicated in their basement kitchen. "It only took a day to do; it looks very effective and people always comment on it," says Chris.

The inspiration for the bathroom came from somewhere closer to home, London's famous Claridges hotel. "We wanted a period look and the team at Amberth were very excited, as they had previously only done very modern rooms," he explains. It was a great project for all concerned.

Further works around the house included a sensitive homage to the house's original features. Chris and Sean made sure that fireplaces were renovated and they also installed some Victorian-style radiators. Another charming detail in their house is the period-specific cornicing which they have reinstated In the sitting room, the soft green walls provide a calming balance with the dark wood flooring and soft furnishings, giving an overall '50s-'60s vibe. Sean had seen the pretty pink curtain fabric used in several work projects – the couple particularly love the way it contrasts with the walls and dark wood floor.

Once the scene was set, Chris and Sean then introduced their favoured mid-century style decoration and furnishings. Original vintage pieces such as the Hans Wegner armchair and John Piper coffee table were placed among vintage reproductions and retro-effect paint colours and fabrics. Chris' self-confessed eBay and Etsy addiction has helped finish the process – he readily admits that parcels arrive on a weekly basis, alongside his finds from antique and junk shops. The house is now filled with a cornucopia of owls, deer, vases and

Above A dark basement space was brought to life with a bright, white kitchen from Amberth, along with a pop of bright wall colour. "It was supposed to be more yellow but it stands out against all the white," says Chris.







The kitchen was transformed from a dark basement to a bright and cheery dining and cooking space, just right for leisurely breakfasts or tasty suppers. Books and ornaments make an interesting feature wall.





Above The stylish guest bedroom is decorated in soothing neutral colours with the cushions sourced from eBay. Chris bought a record player to add to the retro feel and was thrilled to rediscover his beloved LPs.

other decorative ornaments, all beautifully and artfully displayed.

"We honestly don't think much about display and placement – it just happens. We recently decided to re-organise everything in the sitting room," he says. "Some pieces were retired to storage but other new ones were purchased. We've always liked the mid-century style - especially Eames, Knoll and Verner Panton pieces and we'll keep looking at these designers for other furniture around the house," he adds.

The couple's Initial reservations about moving into a new area are now long gone. Chris and Sean are thrilled with the living space and style they have achieved. "We liked the house immediately and now love Dalston. It's changed so much over ten years – we love the diverse businesses and have made some great friends here. And we've also made a great home with plenty of room for entertaining."

KITCHEN MAGIC

The challenges of renovating a Victorian terrace, meant that Chris and Sean called in the professionals to create a space with its own unique personality.

A dark basement kitchen was brought to life with a bright, white kitchen from Amberth, along with a shot of colour in Luscious Lime emulsion by Dulux. There was only one contender to supply the appliances for the kitchen. It had to be Smeg, one of Italy's best-known brands, with its 1950s style fridge-freezer and range cooker for great entertaining.

The high-gloss white kitchen cabinets are a great way of making a modern statement without being overly ostentatious and the latest storage solutions inside ensure that any clutter is kept to a minimum when cooking.

Open-plan living ensured that Chris and Sean had to be careful with blending the kitchen and dining area. A simple display in an Ikea bookcase was the answer. It includes Sean's favourite childhood robot toy, among a selection of owls and glass vases. Chris made the kitchen blind using a John Lewis kit and his sister made the cushions from leftover Marimekko fabric, showing that a crafty vibe runs in the family.

"In the bathroom, the brief was for a period look and Amberth came up with some great ideas to make this small area look spacious," says Chris. Thanks to some careful sourcing from Balineum, John Lewis and Lefroy Brooks, the wash zone looks timeless with some colourful accessories to give it a modern edge.

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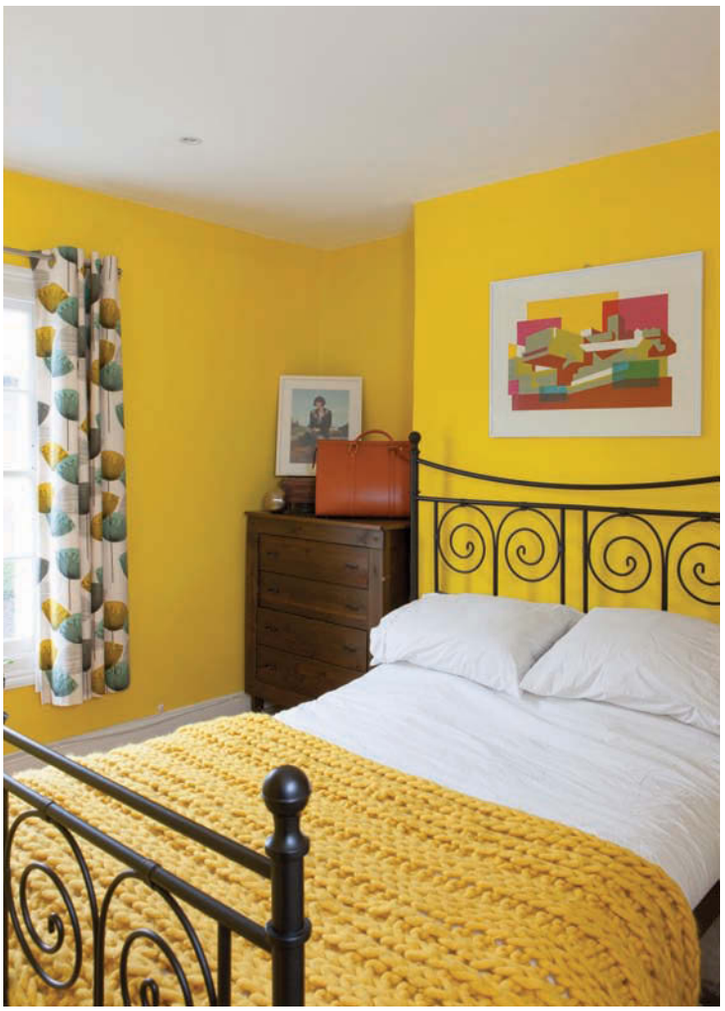




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GAME OF THRONES

TUDOR TRIUMPH

How one majestic building was shaped by history

Words **DAVID SOUDEN & LUCY WORSLEY**

Photography **HISTORIC ROYAL PALACES & SHUTTERSTOCK**



Left The elegance and formality of the court of William III reconstructed in the king's guard chamber. A hundred guards were appointed to attend the king, of whom forty would be on duty at any one time.

Hampton Court is one of Britain's most intriguing buildings and it is really two palaces. Today we can see the remains of the red-brick palace, constructed for Cardinal Wolsey and Henry VIII in the early sixteenth century; and the newer build Baroque palace containing the royal apartments, commissioned by William III and Mary II. Its 1,300 rooms spread over 2.4 hectares (six acres) is in a complex of courtyards, cloisters and chambers. The setting is as fine as the buildings, with 24 hectares (60 acres) of splendid gardens. Many parts, including the world-famous Maze in the wilderness, are precious survivals from a great age of gardening about three centuries ago.

The palace is one of the UK's top historic attractions, as it has been for almost two centuries. It is inextricably linked to Henry VIII, one of the most famous, if also one of the most frightening of monarchs. Here Wolsey entertained his king and foreign ambassadors. Henry VIII and most of his six wives held court in its grand interiors. Shakespeare and his players performed in the great hall, and the authorised version of the Bible was conceived here in 1604. Charles I escaped house arrest after his Civil War defeat. William and Mary brought French court etiquette and a new architectural style to the palace after 1689. In the eighteenth century, Hanoverian kings and princes argued bitterly amid its splendours.

GRACE & FAVOUR

The court stopped using the palace after 1737, in favour of St James Palace, and George III rarely visited. He favoured Windsor Castle as the principal royal retreat outside London. Hampton Court became a retirement home for courtiers and diplomats by 'the grace and favour' of the sovereign. They shared it with an increasing number of tourists. From 1838, when Queen Victoria opened Hampton Court to the public, it became a magnet for millions of visitors from Britain and abroad. "Not in its stones nor in its gold is the greatest glory of a building, nor yet in its antiquity, but in the subtle spell that invests it by its association with those who in the past lived, thought and moved within its walls," said Ernest Law, whose efforts at the end of the nineteenth century are largely responsible for how the palace today is presented.



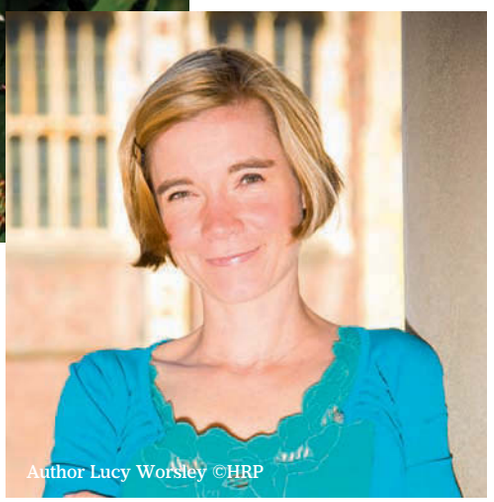
In the great kitchen, completed dishes were passed through the hatch in the wall, on the left to the serving place, beyond. Waiters then took dishes to the waiting courtiers in the great hall.



The decoration of the king's staircase was not completed until after William III's death. Antonio Verrio, who did the work, went on to decorate the queen's drawing room for Queen Anne, the last Hanoverian monarch.







Author Lucy Worsley ©HRP

Far right This pretty sunken garden is one of Hampton Court's many delights and is a labour of love for the gardening team.

Above The maze is the only surviving part of the once extensive wilderness north of the palace. The original hornbeam hedges were damaged by the huge number of visitors. The tough yew of the hedges today is a twentieth century replanting.

Ernest was appointed as the official historian to the Palace, and lived there until his death in 1930. There were always quirky or unexpected characters alongside the royal residents including Sikh princesses who campaigned for women's suffrage, or George I's chocolate cook, not to mention the hundreds of people who have got lost in the Maze and all have their part in the story. Today Hampton Court Palace is a busy workplace. It is looked after by Historic Royal Palaces, the independent charity which conserves the 'unoccupied' royal palaces and helps people to learn more about all the stories they hold.

To understand the building, it is essential to know about court life and the etiquette that underpinned it. The monarch's household, the royal court, was for centuries the political centre of the nation. At court, patronage and favour were given to those who pleased the sovereign, and taken away from those who displeased him. All attention was centred on the king or queen, who may actually have been seen by few, but whose presence was tangible. This was expressed both in the architecture and physical arrangement of the court.

SEAT OF POWER

English sovereigns had many houses, and the court moved with them. Before regular parliaments and a modern constitutional monarchy, the national administration and treasury were functions of court and the royal household. Where the monarch resided, there was the court, and people of high social standing expected to participate as courtiers. These houses were physical expressions of the ceremonial rituals focused on royalty and the logistics of servicing a vast number of people. Hampton Court was only one of over 60 houses owned by Henry VIII, which the court would visit for periods varying from a few hours to a few months.

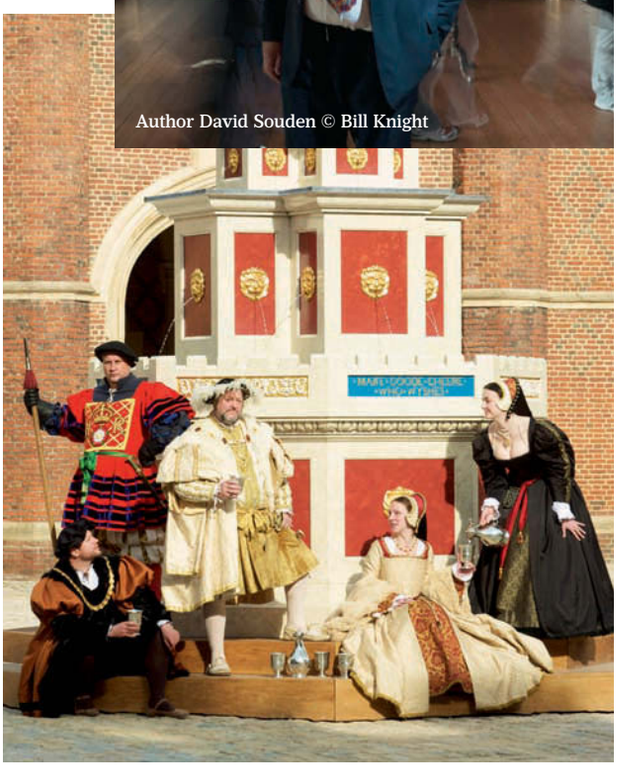
The monarch's throne was at the heart of a vast and slowly revolving array of functionaries, personal attendants, councillors, visiting members of the aristocracy and their servants, sight seers and tradesmen. The long chains of rooms in the place, one leading into each other, acted like a filter. The guards at each doorway prevented the unworthy from penetrating the king's inner rooms. Clothes played a vital part in the guards' decision whether to let someone pass, and clothing consumed a high proportion of a courtier's income.

Once inside the gates, the visitor found two main departments of the court. The Lord Chamberlain was responsible, for running the state rooms, and the Lord Steward's domain was the 'below stairs' area including the kitchens. When the king was in residence, milling crowds pushed through the courtyards. There could be as many as 800 people in attendance at Henry VIII's court. The centre of life for most lower-ranking members of the court was the great hall, where in Tudor times they dined in two shifts in the middle of the day. Senior courtiers ate in the adjoining great watching chamber. Henry VIII himself ate in stately isolation in his dining room with courtiers looking on: his dishes were produced in his own privy kitchen rather than in the great kitchen serving the great hall.





Author David Souden © Bill Knight



Provisioning the royal household placed such a huge burden on the surrounding countryside that the court could not remain for long. In the later seventeenth century, the cost of feeding the whole household became prohibitive and the privilege was abolished for all but the grandest. Courtiers then had to make their own arrangements but the palaces always contained accommodation for them, indeed William III's courtiers squabbled over the allocation of lodgings in the newly rebuilt palace at the end of the seventeenth century.

A high-ranking Tudor visitor would expect to pass though the great hall into the more exclusive rooms beyond. Similarly, a visitor in later centuries would climb the king's or queen's staircases to reach the state apartments above. The sequence included a guard chamber, a privy or audience chamber, where the monarch sat beneath a canopy of state, an eating room, an inner privy chamber, a withdrawing room and finally a bedchamber. In the withdrawing room select visitors could see their sovereign in a less formal setting, perhaps playing games or in conversation. In the eighteenth century the 'drawing room' became a both a place and an event, an entertainment with cards and tea-drinking where the king or queen would circulate for an hour or so.

Above Soon after their accession to the throne, William and Mary commissioned Sir Christopher Wren to rebuild Hampton Court. His original plan was to demolish the entire Tudor palace, apart from the great hall, but he had to be content with rebuilding the royal apartments on the south and east sides of the site.

FIT FOR A KING



Discover more in *The Story of Hampton Court Palace,* published by Merrell Publishers, £19.95.

The book, from which this piece is extracted, is available for the special price of £16.95 for *Period Ideas* readers, including postage and packing (UK only) by telephoning the team at Marston Book Services on **01235 465 500** and quoting the reference **MPMERHCP**.







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> No matter your colour preference or décor style, there's sure to be a shade that will work for your scheme

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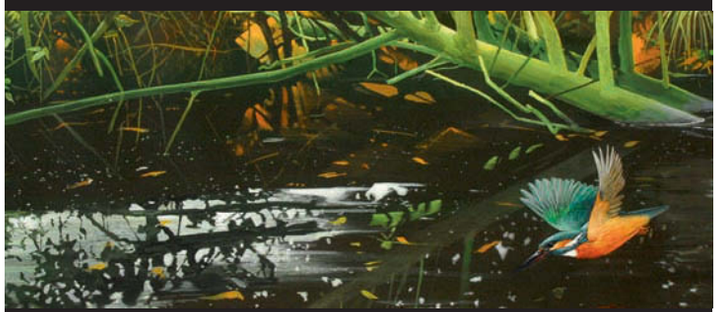
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GLAZE ANATOMY

Collectables

Margaret Powling delves into delftware and discovers what made this form of decorative pottery so popular

It's surprising the difference a glaze makes. An earthenware pot isn't much use without one, due to the porous nature of clay. But add an exceedingly thin layer of glass (i.e. glaze) and then fire it in a kiln so that the glass fuses with the surface and you instantly have a pot which is impermeable to liquids. A clever bit of chemistry, that.

This process was first discovered by early Assyrian potters. They created an opaque white surface – an ideal base for the application of decoration - by adding a small percentage of tin ashes to a standard lead glaze. The technique caught on rapidly, spreading across Europe and eventually reaching the island of Majorca. Here, 'maiolica' was created, which John Black, a specialist in tin-glazed earthenware, describes as "one of the glories of world ceramics." Italian maiolica was much admired and imitated in France, where it was referred to as 'faience'. The English term 'delftware' derives from the centre for tin-glazed earthenware in Holland, the town of Delft.

ROYAL REQUEST

In the 16th century, the Italian potters migrated to Antwerp but, in the face of religious persecution, many left to seek out more peaceful locations. Two such potters, Jasper Andries and Jacob Jansen, arrived in Norwich in 1567, bringing their pottery skills with them. When the business didn't pick up in Norwich, the pair petitioned Queen Elizabeth I for a waterside site in London and a twenty-year monopoly on the production of paving tiles, apothecaries' pots and other wares. Their request wasn't granted but they set up a pot house in Aldgate in 1570, where work continued for the next fifty years.



In 1618, another notable factory was established at Pickleherring Quay in Southwark by another immigrant potter, the Dutchman Christian Wilhelm, which employed both Dutch and English workers.

The seventeenth century is also famous for the arrival of Chinese porcelain in Europe. The English had an insatiable appetite for these wares, and as English potters had yet to discover the secret formula for making true porcelain, they copied the Oriental designs in tin-glazed earthenware, in order to cash in on the growing demand. They also started to emulate the Dutch approach to the Oriental blue-and-white landscape designs, although the bodies of English delftware were softer and less refined than their true Dutch counterparts.

"In the early days of tin-glazed earthenware in England, only the top surface was given a glaze with tin: the underneath had a lead glaze, probably for cheapness," says John Black. From around 1690, Delft potters started using a second lead to enhance the brightness of the colours, known as kwaart glaze, and some British makers also worked with kwaart, but with less striking results.

PORCELAIN PERILS

Factories sprang up in Brislington and Liverpool, as well as London, and production of English delftware peaked in the middle of the 18th century. But the industry declined with the arrival of a new ceramic called creamware (developed by potter and entrepreneur, Josiah Wedgwood), as well as the development of English porcelain which, unlike delftware, could withstand the thermal shock of boiling liquids.

Another major problem with delftware was the price. The hazards of firing meant that less than half of delftware pieces survived and this, together with the laborious process of hand decoration, added to the cost. The wares were also fragile and though the pottery bodies themselves were robust, the thin tin-glaze was liable to chip.

Despite its faults, delftware is still a popular choice among collectors, as Antony Ray of the Ashmolean Museum explains. "One of the most remarkable things about the delftware pottery industry was the way in which it tried to cater for every possible domestic need. In terms of decoration, the potters were imitators and adapters rather than innovators. English delftware made up for any relative lack of refinement by its spontaneity and honesty, and by its variety."

Further reading

British Tin-Glazed Earthenware by John Black (Shire Books)
English Delftware by Anthony Ray (Jonathan Horne Publishing)



Left
An important English delftware polychrome posset pot, dated 1695, **bonhams.com**

Top right
The English term delftware derives from the centre for tin-glazed earthenware in Holland, the town of Delft.

Bottom right
Two English delftware plates, circa 1730–40, **bonhams.com**





Margaret's Excellent Advice

Our expert shares her hints on identifying true English delftware

Tin-glazed earthenware can be detected by the way its brittle glaze tends to chip at the edges, which allows a glimpse at the digestive-biscuit colour of the earthenware body beneath the glaze. English delftware is similar to its Dutch counterpart but the overriding mood, according to one source, is "provincial and naïve rather than urbane and sophisticated."

According to John Black, "For early pieces it is difficult to distinguish Netherlands from English origin, since both were made by Netherlands-trained potters. The only sure way to tell is by chemical analysis of the body, a technique with which the British Museum specialists have made remarkable contributions in recent years, but this approach has not yet been used to identify work from different British factories."

DIARY DATES

● **Antiques & Fine Art Sale, Fellows Auctioneers, 1st June**
Whether you're looking to buy something special for a loved one or you're on the hunt for statement antiques to furnish your home, Fellows Auctioneers has a sale to suit all budgets and tastes. Its experts will be on hand to provide you with the advice you need to track down your dream item, so you can bid with confidence. As well as investing in spacious and comfortable auction rooms, the business has also integrated the latest technology into its website, making buying and selling as easy as possible. Open from 10am–4pm.
0121 212 2131, fellows.co.uk

● **Olympia International Art & Antiques Fair, London, 18th–28th June**
Olympia is the UK's largest and most established art and antiques fair, and enjoys a long-standing reputation as one of the summer's top cultural events. Whether you want vintage jewellery or unique Art Deco furniture, the eclectic mix of 170 of the world's leading specialist dealers offers something for everyone. Tickets are £15 in advance, £20 on the door. Check website for opening times.
0115 896 0269, olympia-art-antiques.com

● **Hatfield House Antiques & Collectors Market, Hertfordshire, 20th June**
Combine the thrill of bartering for a bargain with the buzz of exploring a stunning location at this fantastic event. One of the ten treasure houses of England, Hatfield has many superb examples of Jacobean craftsmanship for design fans to enjoy. Once you've admired the amazing architecture, you can hunt for the perfect antique piece for your own home, from an array of top quality stalls. Entry and parking are free, open from 10am–5pm.
07751 296 625, hatfield-house.co.uk

● **Runway Monday at Newark Antiques & Collectors Fair, Nottinghamshire, 13th July**
From the 27th April, Swinderby one-day Antiques & Collectors Fair will take place on the runway adjacent to the Newark Air Museum and the Newark & Nottinghamshire Showground. With closer connections to major road networks the fair will be much more accessible, and there are improved facilities for visitors to enjoy. Tickets are £10 from 8am, £5 from 10am. Open until 10pm. Under 16s enter free, and free car parking is also available.
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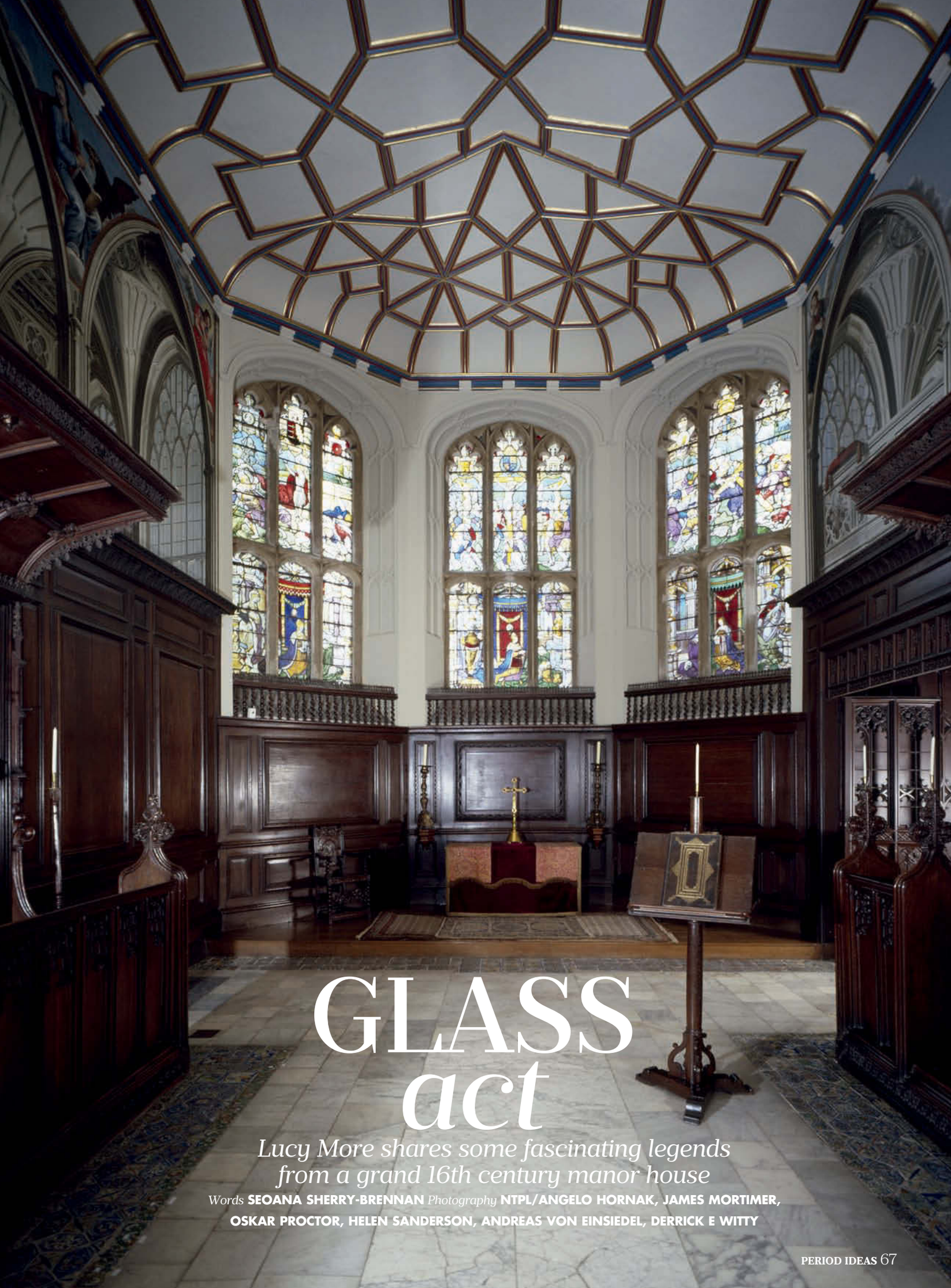
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GLASS *act*

Lucy More shares some fascinating legends from a grand 16th century manor house

Words **SEOANA SHERRY-BRENNAN** *Photography* **NTPL/ANGELO HORNAK, JAMES MORTIMER, OSKAR PROCTOR, HELEN SANDERSON, ANDREAS VON EINSIEDEL, DERRICK E WITTY**

No matter what your favourite fairy tale may be, one element unites most narratives – a happy ending. This sort of story never loses its charm, especially when the finale comes after a hard-fought battle. Stories of survival, where the protagonist has succeeded against all the odds, fill us with hope, which is why the tale of the stained glass at The Vyne is particularly captivating.

The Tudor manor house, situated in Hampshire, is currently undergoing an ambitious project to remove and restore 17 of the 18 stained glass windows located in the property's chapel. It's quite astounding that the windows have survived for this long, as House and Collections Manager, Lucy More, explains. "The glass was at risk as soon as it was installed, because it depicted Catherine of Aragon, who fell out of favour soon after the glass was made. During the 16th–18th centuries, Protestant reformers would have loathed the Catholic scenes depicted in the glass, while the Royalist imagery would have made it a prime target for Parliamentarians throughout the Civil Wars. It really has survived a huge amount in the time that it's been here."

The origins of the stained glass and its survival are shrouded in myth and mystery. It is believed to have been created for the nearby Holy Ghost chapel by Flemish glaziers, and then removed for protection during the Civil War. A note in the Hampshire Records Office, which is addressed to Sir Charles Mill of Mottisfont, claims that the glass nearly suffered a watery demise, stating that it "was packed into chests and sunk in the ponds at the back of the house where it remained until the estate was sold to Chaloner Chute." This is just one of the many intriguing stories that surround The Vyne which, according to Lucy, is "always revealing its secrets".



FAMILY MATTERS

As well as its impressive collection of legends, The Vyne also has a rich architectural history. It was built by Henry VIII's Lord Chamberlain, William, 1st Lord Sandys in the early 16th century, and Henry himself visited numerous times between 1510 and 1535. The chapel, home to the magnificent stained glass windows, and the oak gallery are the sole surviving features of the Tudor powerhouse and, according to Lucy, are the most atmospheric parts of the property. "The oak gallery has spectacular linenfold panelling with coats of arms carved into it, depicting the entire history of Tudor England. The interior of the chapel has a real atmosphere, you can feel that it is a very special place as soon as you walk in."

Another key figure in The Vyne's history is John Chute, who lived at the property during the early 18th century. His ancestor, Chaloner Chute, took on the house in 1653, and transformed it from Sandys' status symbol into a liveable family home. John was a close confidant of Horace Walpole, who is famed for reviving the Gothic style at his Twickenham home, Strawberry Hill. "You can really see that John had grand ideas for The Vyne," Lucy explains. "He worked hard to preserve the features from earlier periods, which is why we still have the oak gallery, with its fantastic Tudor panelling. He didn't mess about with things that he felt were of great importance to The Vyne, he just added his own flourishes.

"The whole Chute family was really conscientious in the way that its members went about restoring the property. We've got a fabulous history of stewardship which is great for us because, as the National Trust, that's what we're all about. Each generation made its own additions and alterations but still retained the integrity of the house."





1 The gardens are a peaceful escape, with secret picnic spots, an ornamental lake and a working kitchen garden, which has seasonal produce available to purchase.

2 The interior of the chapel has an undeniable ambience, even for secular visitors.

3 The chapel floor boasts decorative 16th century Flemish floor tiles, which date back to the early 1500s and feature animals, birds and geometrical figures.



LIGHT SHOW

This summer, The Vyne is set to undergo another transformation, with the removal and restoration of the chapel's magnificent stained glass windows. This ambitious plan comes after the successful completion of a pilot study on one of the 18 lights in 2013.

"This is a really exciting project for us," says Lucy. "It's a big step forward, not just for the Trust, but for the conservation of stained glass. Once the glass has been taken out the chapel will be flooded with natural light for the first time in 500 years, and visitors will be able to see the incredible detail within it. There will also be a unique opportunity to see the glass up close, as the scaffolding platform will be kept up after the conservation is complete. The conservators will be wearing head-cams throughout, so that the whole process can be viewed live or downloaded."

The conservation is set to be completed by the end of this autumn. There'll be no time for rest though, as the team will be straight on to their next endeavour, fund-raising for a new roof. "There's been a slow degradation of the roof for a while," Lucy explains, "but it seriously deteriorated last winter when we had those terrible storms. It's a really positive time for The Vyne at the moment, as we look forward to a period of a great deal of conservation. This is what it's all about ultimately, getting things done and continuing to conserve our properties and estates."

Each generation of the Chutes made its own additions and alterations but still retained the integrity of the house



4 The magnificent Tudor oak gallery is sure to pique the interest of anyone with a passion for this period.

5 This light shows Henry's sister, Queen Margaret of Scotland, with St Margaret of Antioch.

Get INVOLVED

On 26th June and 17th July, The Vyne's conservators will host guided tours of the Chapel and the Chapel Gallery. The Vyne is also offering stained glass and glass painting workshops throughout the summer. To find out more, call **01256 883 858** or visit **nationaltrust.org.uk/vyne**

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3 Wooden parasol, £67, Littlewoods. 0844 822 8000, **littlewoods.com**

4 Wooden folding directors chair, £35, Tesco Direct. 0800 323 4050, **tesco.com/direct**

5 Kissing squirrels picnic blanket, £36, Clare Loves. 01494 874 101 **clareloves.co.uk**

6 Mid-century poppy design lunch bag, £3.95, Dotcomgiftshop. 020 8746 2473, **dotcomgiftshop.com**

7 Aland wooden picnic bench, £179, B&Q. 0333 014 3357, **diy.com**

8 Stacking jug and tumblers, £15, Marks & Spencer. 0333 014 8000, **marksandspencer.com**



5



6



7



8

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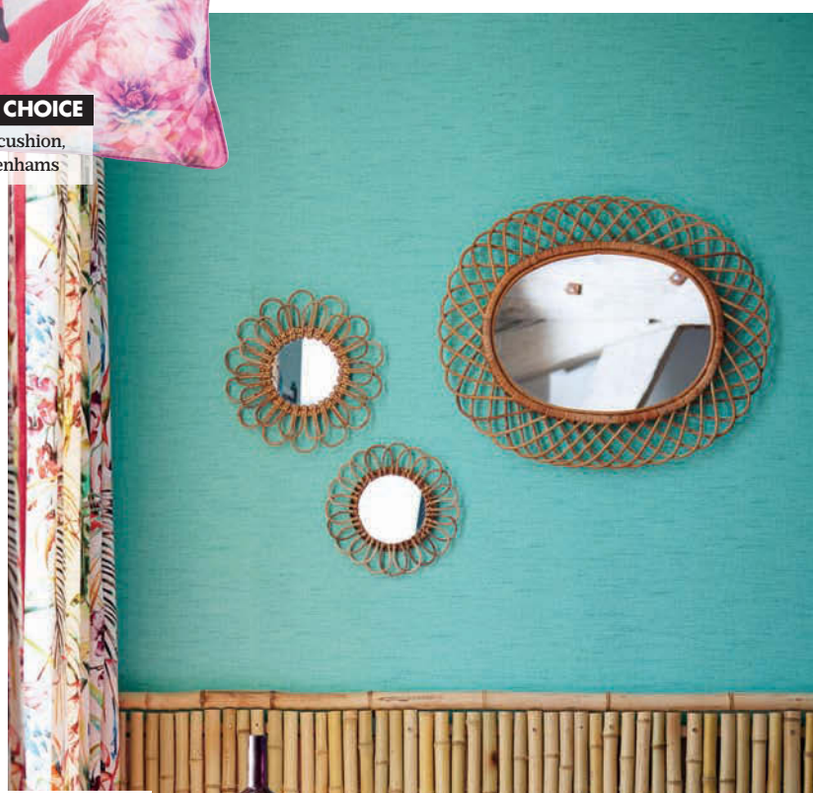
Hawaii embroidered cushion, £12; metal frame folding deck chairs, £30 each, all Tesco Direct



EDITOR'S CHOICE

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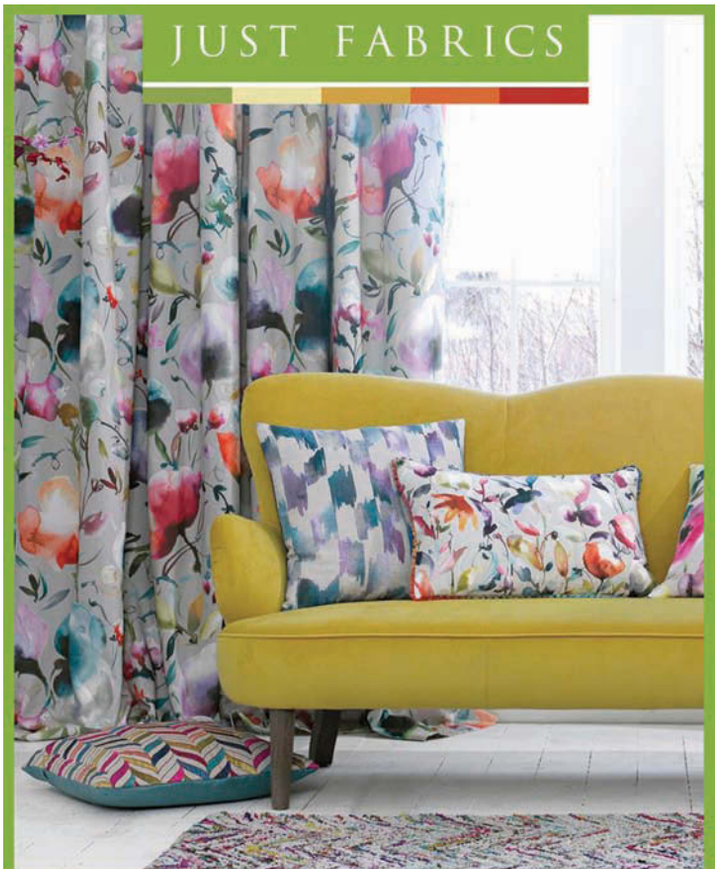
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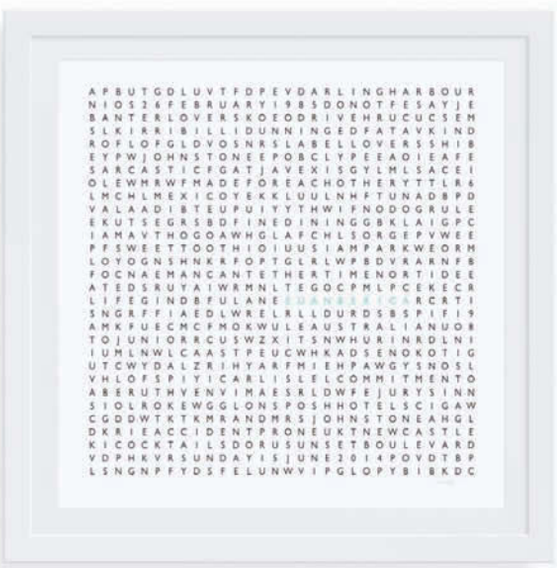
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SHADY BUSINESS

Dressing your windows can be a joy this summer, says Susan Dickerson

The importance of making a statement with windows is something our ancestors would have understood well. When you're next in a stately home, you'll notice that the size of the windows varies according to the status of the person using the room. In the servants quarters the windows are small and high up, but in drawing rooms and dining rooms, the windows are most likely to be glorious expanses of glass, where the landowner could admire his estate with ease.

Although your view may be of the back garden or the street outside, you need to make sure your window dressings work well with the rest of your décor and the architectural features in your house. In the summer months, shutters can really come into their own and help you to protect your privacy. Cafe-style shutters are a great idea for a dining area or a breakfast room, as you can enjoy plenty of light coming in from above without the world and his wife seeing you having a meal.

Another way to make your dining room distinctive is to combine curtains with Roman blinds, so you can create a slightly smarter feel when entertaining and also have another layer against the cold in the winter. Fully-lined Roman blinds are a good investment will help to prevent fabrics from fading as well as filtering out some of the light. A black out lining on new blinds are worth considering, before we move into high summer, so that the sun's rays don't disturb your slumbers earlier than you would like.



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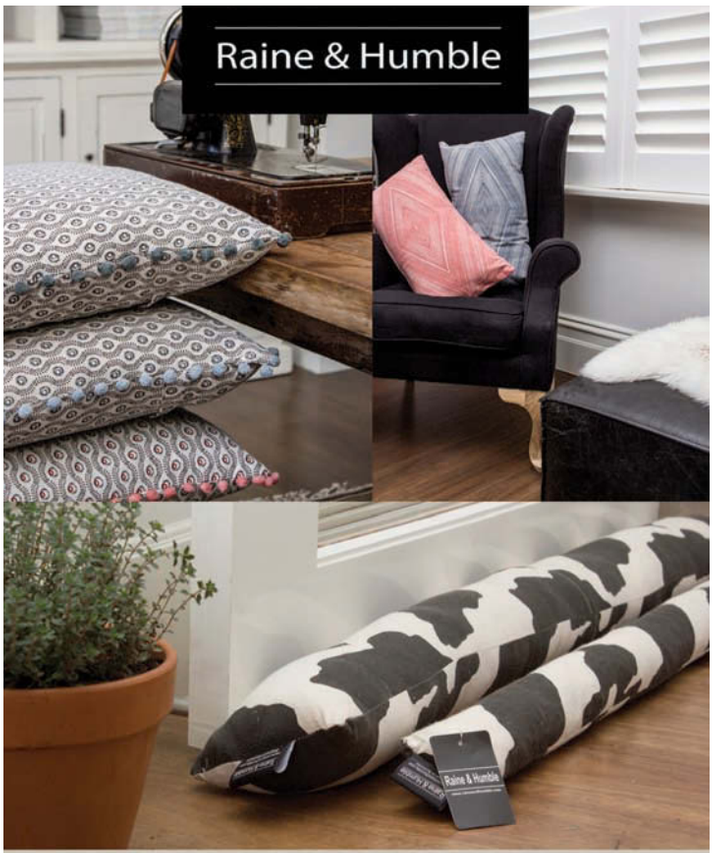
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Another aspect to consider is that interior shutters usually hinge on either side of a window opening and swing inwards to allow access to the window, so you need to think about how this will work in your house. Make sure that there will be enough space to accommodate the shutters and that you will be happy with the way they may change the look and feel of your room. It really is vital that you work with an expert, especially if you are new to shutters and blinds, to ensure that you get exactly what you want and understand how best to care for your new purchase.

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OPEN & SHUT CASE

The world of shutters and blinds may seem to have a language of its own, especially when it comes to the various components of your purchase, so remember there is no such thing as a silly question when you're in the showroom, and do make sure you test how sturdy the cords, slats, rods, pulls and wands are. It is wise to make sure that everyone in the household has got the dexterity to operate the controls before making a purchase, especially if they don't know their own strength, to avoid any accidents.

Made-to-measure shutters can look great in a period house and are not as expensive as you might think. You do need to bear in mind that you will have an extra barrier between you and your window pane which means that you will be filtering out street noise as well as providing some excellent insulation. Take care if your doors and windows which open inwards, as you will need to be sure that they will still open if new shutters are fitted over them.



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GIVE IT A REST

Seoana Sherry-Brennan shares the decorating secrets that will help to encourage a good night's sleep



Coastal Stripe natural linen bedding, £79 for a double duvet set; Oxford pillowcase, £12 for standard size; Oxford square pillowcase, £15, Secret Linen Store.

As children, one of the things we dread the most is going to bed. The older we get, the more we begin to appreciate the restorative qualities of forty winks, and we crave the moment we can slip between the sheets. Good sleep is a key factor in promoting good mental and physical health, with a top quality snooze helping our brains to function properly and encouraging growth and repair in our bodies.

Despite its importance, getting to sleep isn't as simple as shutting our eyes and drifting off. Lots of different factors play a part, many of which are to do with our environment. The way our sleeping space is decorated is crucial in providing the best chance of a good night's sleep, which is why we've consulted the experts to discover how you can furnish your bedroom to ensure sweet dreams.

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Left Blocout roller blinds, from £59, Bloc Blinds.

Bottom left Loose-fit country style bed skirt with frills in Lavender Rosendal pure washed linen, from £199, Bemz.

Bottom right Emma Bridgewater Hearts & Flowers bedding, from £40 for a single quilt cover; Oxford pillowcase, £12; cushions, from £20 each, Ashley Wilde.





PUT TO BED

The most important place to start is with the bed. While it makes sense to pick a frame that blends in with your décor, it is vital that you invest in a mattress that provides you with adequate support and comfort. "As mattresses increase in price, they tend to have more springs and better quality fillings," says Adam Black of Button & Sprung. "The higher the number of springs and the more luxurious the filling, the more the mattress will contour to your body, hence the less interrupted and more comfortable your sleep will be."

The next thing to consider is what goes on top of your bed. Good quality bed linen is essential for a restful sleep, as Molly Freshwater, co-founder of Secret Linen Store, explains. "When it comes to sheets, the thread count and quality are important. If you treat yourself to luxury options, sleeping between them will be a pleasure." Choose a design that makes a statement and don't be afraid to combine different textures – comforting fabrics will make snuggling up even more enjoyable.

MAKES SCENTS

Once your bed is sorted, it's time to address the rest of the room. Strong shades stimulate the brain and make it harder to snooze, so opt for muted hues, which will make you feel calm and relaxed. Blue is a great choice as it is linked to soothing feelings, and yellow and green also work well, as they remind us of the warm glow of the sun and the peaceful beauty of nature, which encourages a state of relaxation.

Fragrance can also help us to sleep, as our sense of smell is directly linked to the emotional part of our brain. There are many calming scents which can aid slumber – use lavender, vanilla or jasmine if you have trouble relaxing.

If you're prone to being a bit of a clutter bug, now is the time to re-think your habits, as an overflowing wardrobe or messy surfaces will detract from what should be a calming oasis. Footstools & More offers a range of handy storage solutions in a wide array of stylish fabrics and designs, to help stash away unnecessary knick-knacks.

LIGHT SHOW

Finally, consider the lighting in your sleeping space. If it's too harsh or bright, it will make it more difficult for brains and bodies to switch off.

If the lighting outside your home is the issue, consider a black out blind, heavy curtains or a set of shutters. Chrissie Harper, operations manager at California Shutters, explains the benefits of this option. "If your sleep is disturbed by sunlight or street lamps, full height, solid-style shutters are a stylish solution. Keeping the shutters closed will block out all light in the evening, whilst during the day you can open them fully to clear the window, allowing all available daylight to fill your home."

It's crucial that you care about your sleep and do everything you can to encourage it, as feeling well-rested can help us to face tough days and stressful life events. We spent a third of our lives sleeping, so make sure that this huge portion of time is spent as comfortably and enjoyably as possible.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Ashley Wilde **01707 635 201, ashleywildegroup.co.uk**
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Bloc Blinds **0800 107 5535, blocblinds.co.uk**
Button & Sprung **03333 201 801, buttonandsprung.com**
California Shutters **0808 163 4848, californiashutters.co.uk**
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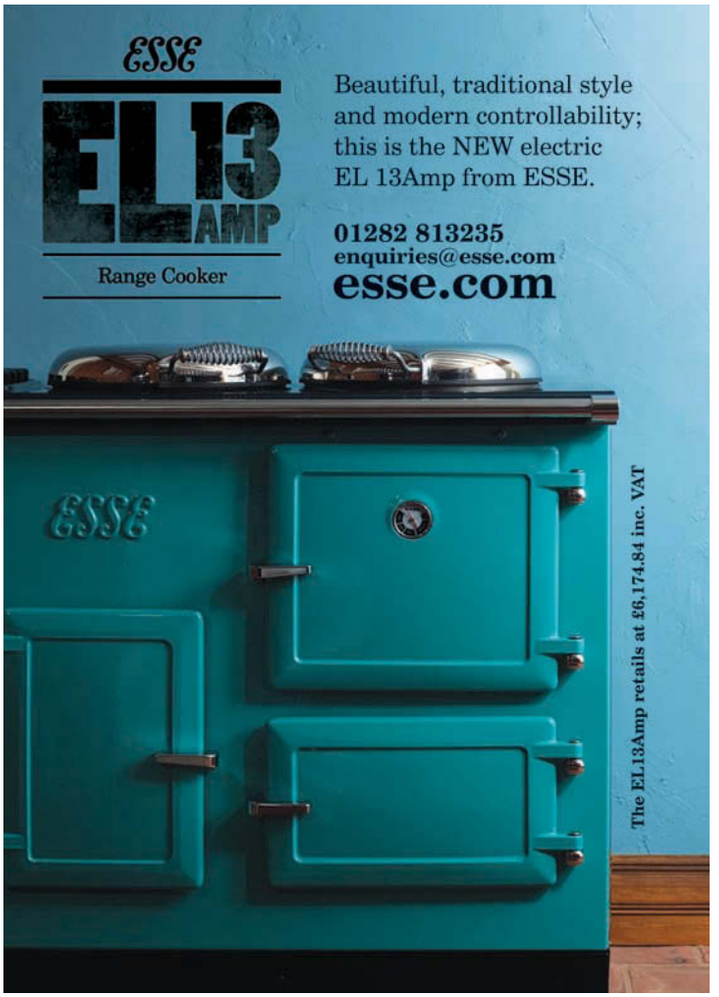
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HEART & SOUL

Bring a relaxed feel to your home with a fabulous kitchen says Susan Dickerson

Some things go together like peaches and cream or rhubarb and custard. At *Period Ideas* we love the look and feel of traditional English kitchens, especially when the latest technology enhances an old faithful and makes it even better. At the heart of the kitchen are hard-working, trustworthy appliances. Range cookers are still fantastic eye-candy and objects of desire, whether you want to go for a colourful option or stick to a traditional metallic hue.

Firing up this kitchen dragon will revolutionise meal times as you'll discover a whole new way of cooking and the dog will also find a cosy new spot to linger. If you're tempted to buy a range cooker then do your homework thoroughly, to ensure that you can factor in running costs and regular services.

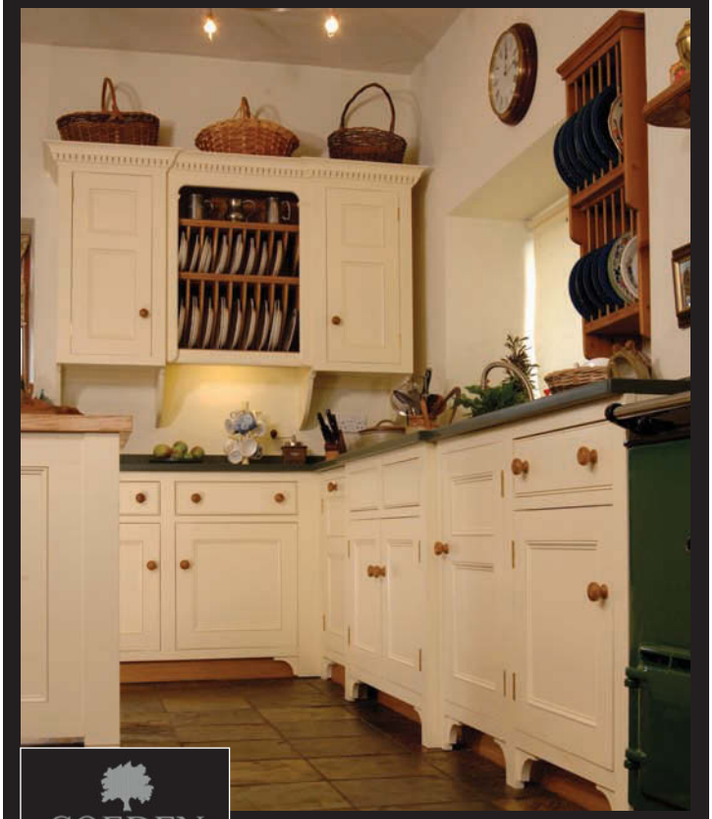
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1

If your traditional range is on all the time, you may need a back-up cooker in the summer, as having a constant source of heat in the kitchen may not appeal in bikini weather.

SPACE SAVING

Although open-plan living is reinvented every ten years, we forget that our ancestors often had little choice in living in one-room cottages which served as kitchen, bedroom and living room. Having a separate kitchen, let alone dining room, would have been hard to imagine. Today the rise of the kitchen as a sanctuary and nurturing space means that my grandmother was ahead of her time by having an armchair perched next to the boiler!

Designers can help us blend spaces by offering cabinet furniture which matches kitchen units, so you can give a unified feel to any living or dining areas. The rediscovery of the sideboard has also streamlined storage and helped us to separate everyday crockery and glassware from our best tableware.

When it comes to entertaining at home you need to ensure that your guests are comfortable and have enough space around a dining table. The most helpful advice I've ever had when buying dining room furniture is to consider how long I would be happy to sit on a particular chair for without a cushion.

It pays to sit at every place before a dinner party to make sure there is enough room to move the chair back comfortably without disturbing other guests, especially if the celebrations will be long and liquid. Take some time for a quick health and safety check of the kitchen and the dining area to make sure that there are no spills on the floor, trailing leads or pets primed for titbits. Although our natural inclination is to relax as soon as guests arrive bearing gifts, do remember that they don't know the quirks of your house as well as you do, so be prepared!



3



2

Blend a kitchen and living area with similar furniture in inviting colours

ISLAND LIVING

Entertaining at home can mean a balancing act between the kitchen and front of house, just as in the finest restaurants. You can set your boundaries without saying a word when it comes to the design of your kitchen. If you love being a sociable chef, then having couple of perches by the island unit is worth having. But if you'd prefer your guests to be out of the way, then a seating area around the corner is advisable. That way, they are near enough to be able to assist, if you change your mind, and far enough away not to disturb you.

1 A classic Shaker style kitchen incorporating clean lines and classical proportions. Kitchens are priced from £18,000 at Harvey Jones. **0800 389 7365, harveyjones.com**

2 Brighten up the kitchen with charming ceramics. This large cream jug, priced £22, is embossed with a vintage heart design. **01572 759 190, ellajames.co.uk**

3 Discover how to make open-plan living easy with the help of the kitchen and living experts at Kit Stone. Each kitchen range has approximately 50 cabinets so you can get the ideal look for your space at a sensible price. **0370 777 0099, kitstone.co.uk**



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Take a seat

Choosing new living room furniture just got easier with Andrew Davies

If you have ever wished that buying new furniture could be easier, then you need to get in touch with the Handmade Sofa Company. The business, based near Wimborne in Dorset, has one simple aim: to give its customers what they want. "We can draw on over 40 years' experience and expertise in manufacturing furniture in Britain and we are proud to offer unrivalled quality and flexibility," says Andrew Davies, company director. "We also believe in providing excellent customer service and we will make your furniture exactly the way you want it – at a price that won't break the bank."

Take a look at the firm's clear and easy to navigate website, to get some inspiration for some new sitting room furniture and rest assured that your purchase can be delivered anywhere in the UK and beyond. Everything is made-to-order in any fabric or leather and a bespoke service is also available. There's no need to compromise on size, colour or cushion fillings ever again as the team can help tailor your purchase to your family's needs.

SUIT YOURSELF

"We can use a standard design and modify it to suit your specific needs, so if you are taller than average, we can add a little depth or height to the back," says Andrew. "You might prefer your sofa to have a wider arm at a lower position or maybe a wooden leg instead of metal. If you cannot find what you are looking for we are also able to create bespoke sofas from scratch using photographs or diagrams. If you have a mental picture of what you want, just sketch it out with some approximate dimensions and send it to us."

The key to finding what is right for you is to have a clear idea of what you want and to communicate it to a specialist. From corner sofas and Chesterfields, to chaise longues and footstools, you can give yourself the furniture you've always dreamed of. "We have always believed that buying a sofa should be all about choice and not compromise," says Andrew.

"That is why every aspect of our sofas, whether it is the design, covering, dimensions, cushion filling or even the stitching can be modified. Our furniture is made using solid beech hardwood frames. All joints are glued and dowelled and heavily reinforced at major stress points with screws ensuring lifetime durability. Seat platforms are steel sprung with serpentine/zigzag springs or webbed with high tension webbing. All of our foam fillings and composites are of the highest quality and comply with the latest fire and safety regulations."



Standard fabric furniture can be delivered in four to six weeks. Bespoke and leather furniture will take a week or two longer. The timescales will vary according to the time of year so do bear in mind that there will be times when the Handmade Sofa Company is particularly busy, if you are looking to have new furniture before Christmas, for example. Remember, everyone on the team is really keen to help you have the fabric or leather furniture you've always wanted and they are happy to advise you every step of the way.

Get in TOUCH
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SHORE THING

Create coastal calm in your home with ocean-inspired décor that is guaranteed to make a splash



Starfish trinket, £2; hanging buoy, £4; fabric bunting, £6; ship in a bottle, £7; cushions, from £7; large chrome lantern, £10; striped throw, £10; blue glass vase, £12; navy throw, £20; Goa coffee table, £225, all George Home. **0844 381 6321, direct.asda.com**

The start of summer heralds many things – flip-flops, the melodic chime of the ice cream van and, most excitingly, holidays. Whether we're jetting off on an exotic adventure or staying closer to home, there's nothing quite like the feeling of anticipation as we prepare to take a break from everyday life. If you want to keep the holiday spirit alive long after the sand has been shaken out of your shoes, bring the essence of the coast into your interiors with some fabulous nautical-inspired home accessories.

Coastal style is guaranteed to be a key trend each season, and this year's version has been influenced by the azure blue and bold marine motifs of the Mediterranean. Fresh and invigorating, the look creates a serene and relaxing ambience, and can be adapted to suit any area of the home. In the bedroom, crisp white sheets and weathered wooden textures will transform your sleeping space into a haven of cool calm. Striped linen textiles and recycled glass accessories in the lounge channel the carefree vibe of a holiday home, and you can boost the comfort factor with a bold, patterned rug and a cosy throw in blue hues, ideal for snuggling up in while enjoying the long, leisurely evenings.

Fill your kitchen with textured ceramics and fish-printed textiles for a dining space that is the perfect location for seafood suppers with friends and family. In the bathroom, look for wooden accessories with rope accents, and reflective surfaces will make a dip in the tub feel like a dip in the ocean. For even brighter interiors, flood your home with natural light and enjoy the season's sunshine by keeping windows free of heavy dressings.

Before you head to the high street to stock up on new homewares, consider which elements of your abode can be adapted to shape your new scheme. Rustic original features such as exposed floorboards should be embraced, and you can whitewash them for true seaside style. Visit your local salvage yard to stock up on antique glassware and weathered wooden furniture and keep your eyes peeled for original hurricane lanterns and sea glass accessories.

This year's take on coastal style is influenced by the azure blue and bold marine motifs of the Mediterranean

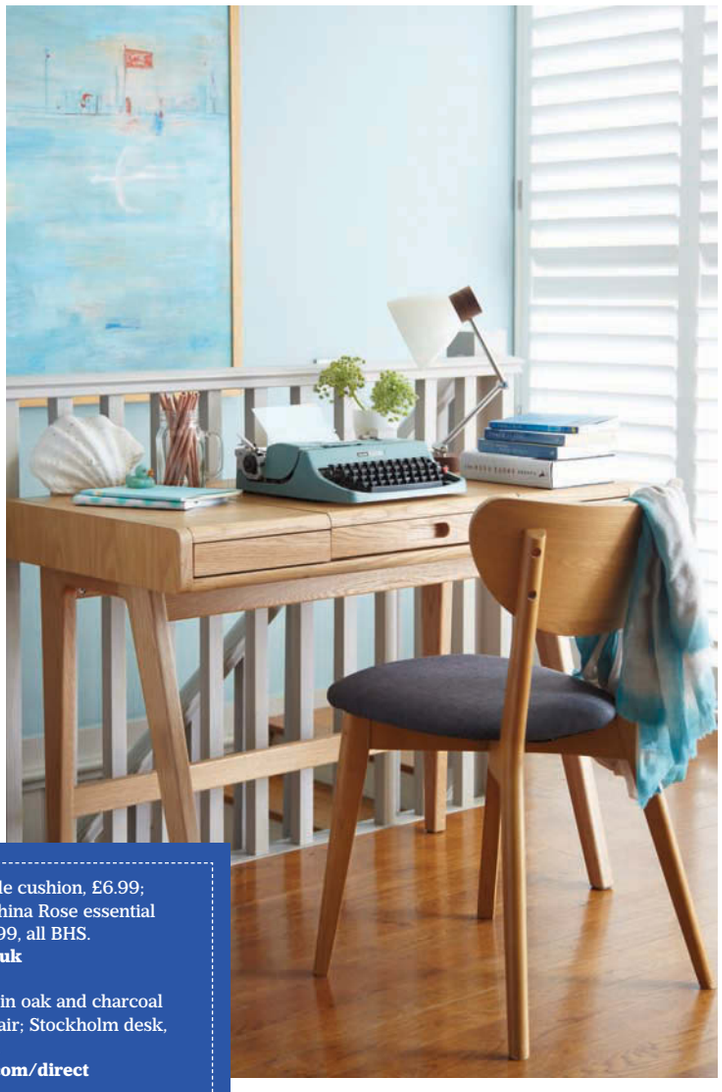




Above Alderley square cushions, £35 each; metal pagoda lantern, £89.50; Alderley throw, £99.50, all Adventino. **0845 120 3224, adventino.co.uk**

Left Blue spray hi-ball glass, £1.50; recycled glass tea-light holder, £3; blue hurricane glass jar, £7.50; turquoise recycled hurricane glass jar, £10, all Tesco Direct. **0800 323 4050, tesco.com/direct**



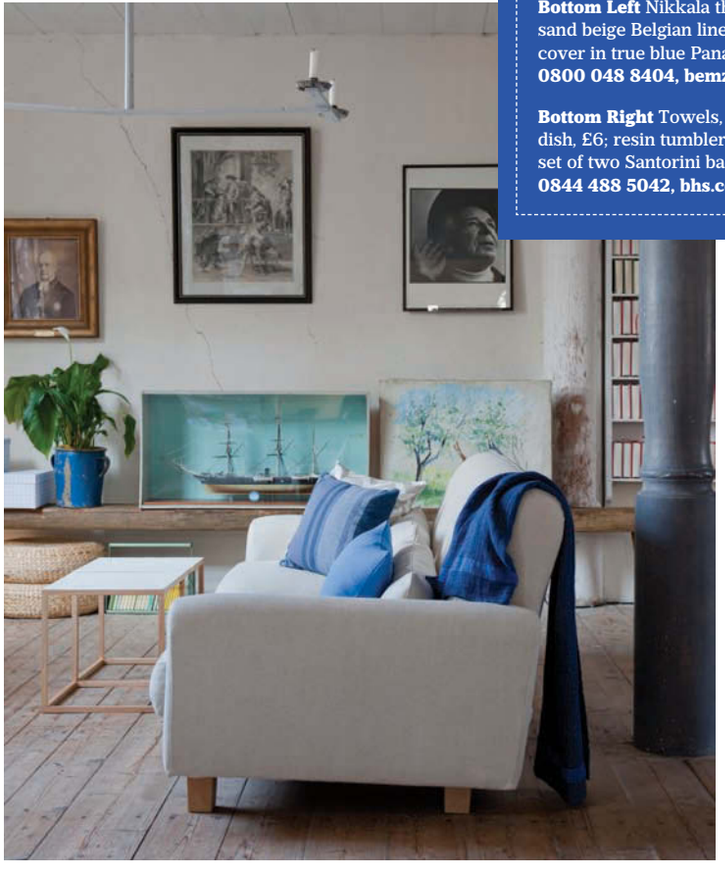


Left Powder blue chenille cushion, £6.99; knitted throw, £14.99; China Rose essential double bedding set, £19.99, all BHS.
0844 488 5042, bhs.co.uk

Right Stockholm chairs in oak and charcoal linen effect, £169 for a pair; Stockholm desk, £299, both Tesco Direct.
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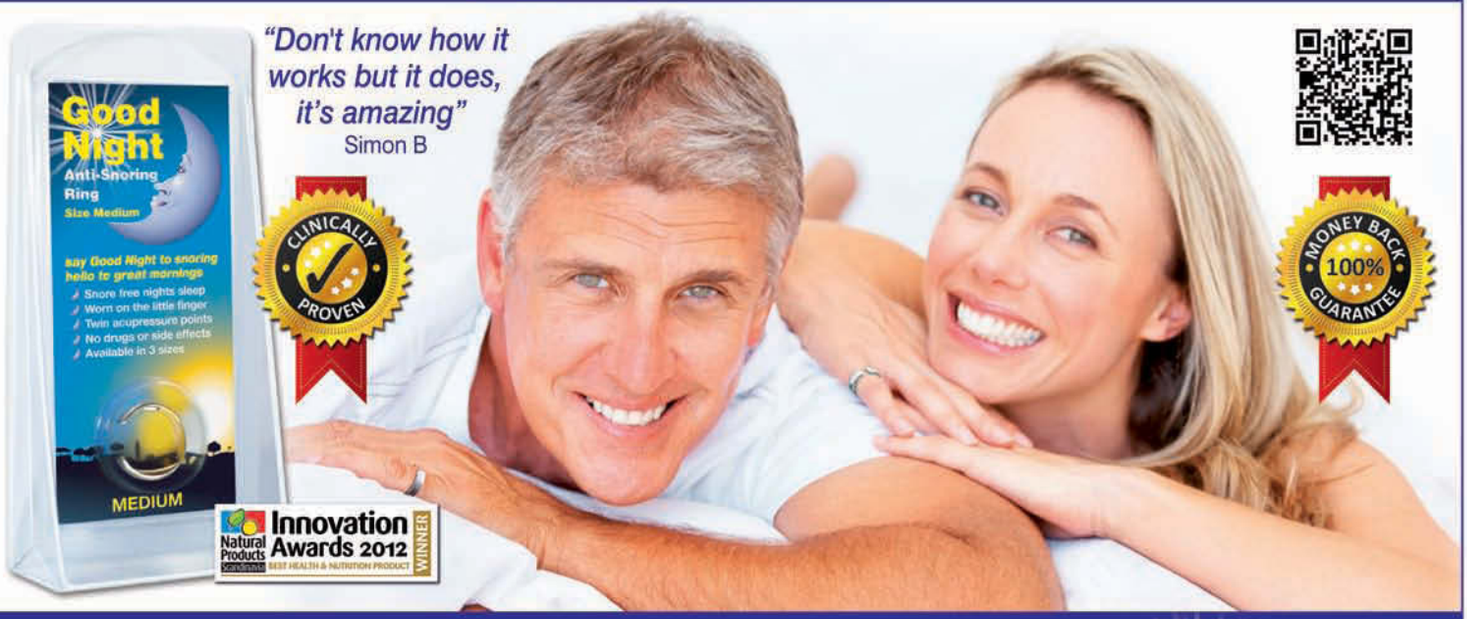
Bottom Left Nikkala three-seater sofa cover in sand beige Belgian linen blend, £329; cushion cover in true blue Panama cotton, £15, all Bemz.
0800 048 8404, bemz.com

Bottom Right Towels, from £3.99; resin soap dish, £6; resin tumbler, £8; tile bath mat, £11.99; set of two Santorini baskets, £20, all BHS.
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Although originally intended for glass or china tumblers, this twin holder is ideal for displaying candles. Priced at £255, Thomas Crapper. **01789 450 522, thomas-crapper.com**



Sensual Silver metallic paint, £18 per 750ml tin, Craig & Rose. **01383 700 011, craigandrose.com**

Perfect pampering

Seoana Sherry-Brennan reveals how to enhance your bathing experience with luxury finishes and accessories

Whether it's a quick spritz in the shower or a long soak in the tub, we all have our own bathing rituals. With a variety of options available to help with the daily cleanse, the bathroom has been transformed from a purely utilitarian space into an extension of the home's living area – a place where we can indulge in some top quality me-time. Today more time and money is being invested in bathrooms, by both manufacturers and home-owners. Gone are the days of a basic bathroom suite, it's time to upgrade your wash zone with a few luxurious touches.

Your first step should be to swap the essentials for something more extravagant. Period-style baths instantly conjure up a feeling of opulence, as they are hand-finished to reach exceedingly high standards. These pieces are built to withstand rigorous use and last for many years, therefore their quality is hard to beat. Place your tub in the centre of your bathroom for a grand statement, and make sure you pay particular attention to the base – traditional polished claw feet will add an extra decorative finish.

Continue to bring in some bling with high-shine fittings. Metallics replicate the glitter of precious jewels, instantly evoking splendour. In terms of decoration, tiles are timelessly elegant, and there are a range of gorgeous finishes on the market to add a touch of luxury to your walls. Glass and metal options are particularly eye-catching, and will also work well in smaller bathrooms, bouncing light around and creating the illusion of space.

CUSTOM COMFORT

To further enhance your daily ablutions, consider how you can use the latest technology in your home. Pampering has gone high-tech, and there are a plethora of products which have been designed to give your bathroom a spa-like feel. Baths with whirlpool and jet options will add an extra touch of indulgence to your routine, and specially designed shower heads can cunningly direct water to soothe aching muscles. If music is the route to relaxation for you, install a sound system so you can enjoy your favourite tunes in the tub.

The best thing about the range of technology available is that it can help you to customise your experience to suit your needs and wishes. At the touch of a button you can adjust the lighting, command your shower to release scented mists, or run your bath at the exact temperature you prefer while you run errands. One of the defining factors of luxury is comfort, and there's nothing more comfortable than spending time in an environment designed to cater specifically to you.



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Bring a burst of colour into your bathroom with Catchpole & Rye's Le Bateau Foix, featuring a stunning painted finish. Inspired by an original 19th century antique bath and hand-finished in the company's workshop, this beautiful tub oozes style, and comes in a number of shades to suit your scheme. Priced at £4,800, for more information on the full range, call **020 7351 0940** or visit **catchpoleandrye.com**



This Mon Empire cast-iron bath is just one of many exquisite tubs from Hurlingham The Bath Company. It is finished using the authentic Vitreous Enamelling process, which creates extreme hardness and durability by fusing four layers of enamelling frit to the cast-iron, ensuring your tub will last for many years of long bubble baths. Priced at £4,195, call **01400 263 310** or head to **hurlinghambaths.co.uk** for more details.



With Cosyfloor™ underfloor comfort heating from demista™, you'll never have to endure chilly feet in the morning again. This innovative technology means there's no need for unsightly radiators, as you can control the temperature underfoot with the handy thermostat. Heated mirror pads and a number of other steam-reducing services are also available for a steam-free reflection after you shower or bath. Find out more about these useful products by calling **01932 866 600** or visiting **demista.co.uk**



The beautiful Calcatta marble from Italy has been carefully replicated for Tile Mountain, resulting in this classic white porcelain tile. Its subtle veining and high gloss finish creates a fresh and clean feel and unlike marble, it doesn't require sealing. Available in two sizes (595mm² and 595mm x 1195mm), Calcatta tiles are priced from £45.55 per m². **01782 223 822, tilemountain.co.uk**



BESPOKE *Beauty*

Seoana Sherry-Brennan discovers what gives Deacon & Sandys oak staircases their superior edge

Despite being an integral part of many properties, stairs are often neglected when it comes to redecoration and renovation, and are considered to be a necessity rather than a design feature. Although we use our stairs many times throughout the day, it's easy not to pay them any attention, instead focussing on what lies beyond them. If shunning your staircase has left you with decorator's remorse, turn it into a striking style statement with a little help from Deacon & Sandys.

Established in 1976, Deacon & Sandys Architectural Joinery specialises in the design, restoration and creation of traditional English interior woodwork and authentically styled 16th and 17th century furniture. The company's forte is architectural joinery, and its team of skilled hand-carvers form incredibly intricate designs, which combine meticulous attention to period detail with creative flair. It manufactures a wide range of high-quality elements for the home, including doors, balustrades, panelling, windows, flooring, bespoke furniture and staircases.

STAIR DOWN

Crafted from the finest oak, using techniques that have been refined through many years of experience, Deacon & Sandys staircases are elegant and stylish. Whether your 16th century cottage is needs a new set of stairs, or you want to install four flights into your newly built timber-framed house, Deacon & Sandys has the answer.

"As well as being a focal point, a staircase is the backbone of a house, and visual evidence of its quality," says Michael Sandys, director of Deacon & Sandys. "We plan each detail with the client, from the type of spindles or splats used, to the thickness of the moulding on the strings. It is then a question of which shade of oak to pick, the degree to which it is distressed and the style of hand carving."

THE FULL PACKAGE

You can rest assured that any pieces produced by Deacon & Sandys will be of the highest possible quality, proven by the commissions it has received from hundreds of customers across Europe, including heritage organisations such as



Deacon & Sandys stylish staircases are crafted from the finest oak by its team of highly skilled hand-carvers





DEACON & *Sandys*
is a specialist in bespoke joinery and architectural joinery products. For more information call **01580 243 331** or head to **deaconandsandys.co.uk** to view examples of previous projects.





the National Trust, churches, interior designers and architects. Over the past thirty years, every member of the team at Deacon & Sandys has fine-tuned each skill that is needed to create outstanding oak furniture and woodwork, and the company provides customers with a complete service, from initial concept right through to installation.

Bespoke pieces are at the heart of the business – it prides itself on not being a mass manufacturer, but a true joinery workshop, creating unique pieces for each client. This passion is demonstrated by the joiners' willingness to adapt to each individual requirement, helping to turn customers' ideas into a reality. The team can work from a variety of sources, and have created pieces based on architects' drawings, thumbnail sketches, and photos of existing antiques.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

As well as authentically reproducing 16th and 17th century furniture, Deacon & Sandys also leads the field in furniture restoration. It provides an extensive range of expert restoration services for original and period woodwork, bringing it up to heritage standard. Each piece produced at its Kent workshop is the culmination of decades of careful research and refined techniques in order to stay as faithful to the look, style, feel and construction of the 16th and 17th centuries as possible. So, if you have some original timber features that are in need of a spot of TLC, or you wish to install period-style pieces into your property, talk to the team at Deacon & Sandys today for guidance on how you can work wonders with wood.

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Above You'll discover an array of reclaimed materials at this year's Salvo fair, including pallets of reclaimed bricks from Architectural Salvage Source, Hertfordshire.
Right A 20th century metal deer head with real deer antlers, from Hertfordshire-based Lynda North.



Below Sir William McAlpine's Fawley Hill estate will be the backdrop for Salvo Fair 2015. Twenty one twelve foot high cast-iron columns rescued from a train station demolition are currently in a field that is normally home to llamas, deer, alpacas and wallabies.



TREASURE HUNT

Guarantee a successful salvage shopping spree with advice from Ruby Hazael

The concept of recycling and reusing has dominated the shopping scene in recent years, with home-owners opting to forgo the new in favour of something with a sense of history. Architectural salvage is fantastic if you want to imbue your home with past times, and it is particularly useful for owners of period properties. Visit your local salvage yard before you begin your next project to find everything from reclaimed bricks and tiles, to doors and fireplaces.

MASTER PLAN

It pays to be prepared when shopping for salvage, as Ruby Hazael, from architectural salvage and antiques specialist Salvo, explains. "Make sure you pack a notepad, as you'll need it to jot down the measurements of items you're on the hunt for. It also helps to write down the contact details of any dealers whose stock you like, as you may want to contact them again in the future. Bring cash and a credit card, as some dealers don't accept cards and there might not be a cash machine on site."

While salvage fairs and yards are great destinations if you have specific items in mind, they are also wonderful places to go for a spot of leisurely rummaging. Even then, it's still worth keeping an eye out for key investment pieces. "Good quality reclaimed timber and stone flooring, reclaimed doors and antique door furniture, antique fireplaces, antique baths, basins and taps that suit the period of your home will all add value to your property," says Ruby. She also recommends being wary of certain items, so that you don't end up wasting your money. "Be practical – old furniture may need repairs or reupholstering, which will increase the total cost. Similarly, old lighting might require updating by an electrician. Antique radiators, baths, basins and taps are often supplied restored and ready to fit, but not always, so make sure you check this with the dealer."

GOING GREEN

As well as being more interested in the provenance of things we buy, we are also keenly aware of the effect that they have on the planet. Investing in salvage items not only saves them from the landfill, it also minimises the environmental impact. "Reusing increases your green credentials and produces less of a carbon footprint than buying brand new. And, although this kind of shopping is not always easy with children, they need to see how it's done so that they grow up with a love and passion for old things and materials," says Ruby.

The key to successful salvage shopping is to act on instinct. Go with your gut, if you want it, get it. Don't let any preconceptions prevent you from making a purchase either – you never know what treasures you'll find when you do. "The most important thing is to be positive and keep an open mind," concludes Ruby. "Do this and you'll be amazed at what you can find to fit your requirements."

FAIR *game*

Salvo Fair is the largest architectural salvage fair in the UK. This year's event will be held on 27th- 28th June at Fawley Hill, Henley-on-Thames. For more information or tickets, call **01225 422 300** or head to **salvo.co.uk**

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Warwick reclamation is a family run business supplying trade and private customers with top quality reclaimed building materials and architectural antiques. Our 2 storey showroom and 2 acre site boasts some fantastic original period features for garden and home.



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Knutsford, WA16 6QN

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Guildford, GU3 1HS

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Tabley, WA16 0JE

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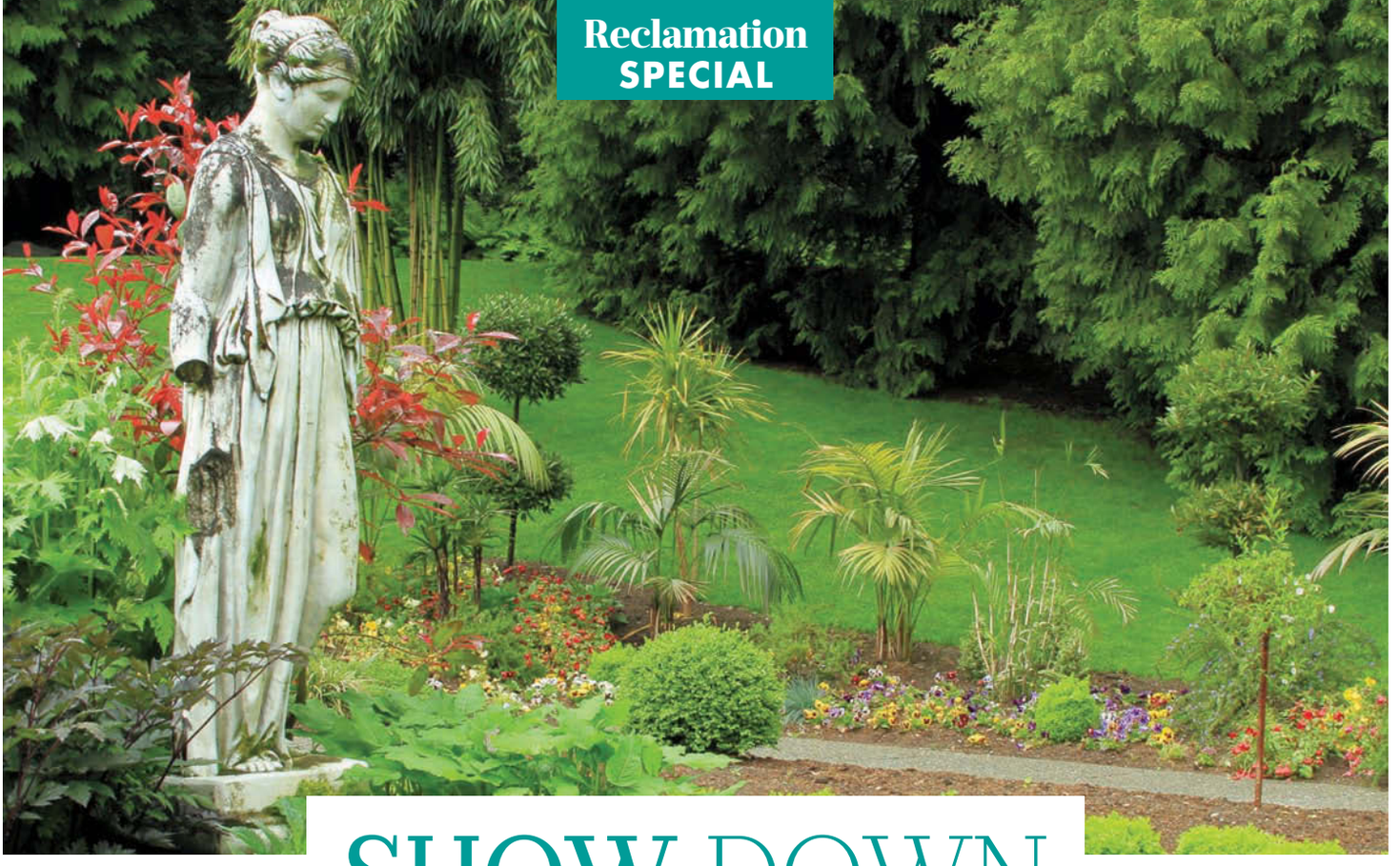
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SHOW DOWN

Get your diary ready to make note of the top fairs and shows this summer



Decorative Home and Salvage Show, Tatton Park, 13th–14th July

Take a trip to the Decorative Home and Salvage Show, where you'll find an array of unusual and beautiful objects with a rich history and character. Built around the theme of true reclamation and recycling, the Decorative Home and Salvage Show brings together a superb selection of specially chosen exhibitors for a showcase of the finest architectural salvage, reclaimed materials, garden statuary, modern and decorative antiques and furnishings on the market. Tickets are £5 per person per day, open 10am–5pm.

01298 27493, asfairs.com



Salvo Fair, Fawley Hill, 27th–28th June

Don't miss this year's edition of Salvo Fair, which takes place at Sir William McAlpine's private estate in Henley-on-Thames, Fawley Hill. There will be exhibitors from Britain and Europe attending, showcasing a huge range of architectural antiques, reclaimed building materials, garden antiques, decorative antiques and more. New this year to the show is Tiny Salvaged Spaces – an exhibition of summerhouses, shepherds huts, reclaimed sheds and living wagons. Tickets are £8 in advance, open from 11am–5pm.

01225 422 300, salvo.co.uk



Bentley's Salvage Fair, Knebworth House, 25th–26th July

Set in a beautiful stately location, Bentley's Fair features a fantastic mix of architectural salvage, decorative antiques and vintage. One of England's most cherished stately homes, Knebworth House itself offers visitors an extraordinary walk through 500 years worth of history. The gardens at Knebworth are delightful throughout the seasons and include a maze, wilderness area and an exciting dinosaur trail, which little ones are sure to enjoy. Tickets are £9.50, open from 10am–5pm both days.

07828 772 475, bentleysfairs.co.uk

BE *prepared*

If you're planning a visit to these or any other shows this summer, follow these top tips from Ruby Hazael. "Wear sensible shoes and bring a warm, weatherproof coat – you never know! Allow yourself lots of time to have a good rummage, it can take a while to see everything. Bring a car or hire a van to transport pieces home, or be prepared to come back later to collect your purchases."

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Far left Cast-iron radiator, Salvagedoctor. **01403 266 400, salvagedoctor.com**
Left Reclaimed doors, Arc Reclamation. **01730 231 995, arcreclamation.com**
Below left Reclaimed brass lion's head knocker, £84, Period Features. **01538 384 682, periodfeatures.co.uk**
Below Victorian Gothic linenfold panelled room in oak, Robert Mills Ltd. **0117 955 6542, rmills.co.uk**

MATERIAL WORLD

Discover how you can use reclaimed and salvaged building materials in your period property

According to figures released by the government in 2012, 44% of the UK's annual carbon emissions come from building and construction work. The Waste and Resources Action Programme also calculated that we use 420 million tonnes of building materials each year. With shocking figures like this, it's crucial that we are more mindful of our environment when it comes to any building or restoration work. One way to minimise the impact of a project, and ensure that any repairs or replacements are in keeping with your property's period style, is to use reclaimed materials.

Pre-loved wood can be used for a variety of different tasks in your home. Nick Newman, flooring specialist at Lassco (020 7394 8061, lassco.co.uk), tells us more. "Reclaimed timber adds character, texture and integrity to your property, and can be used for doors, flooring, mantles and furniture. When sourcing reclaimed wood, look for timber that is de-nailed, has had any split ends trimmed, and isn't too damp or water-damaged. Antique oak is one of the finest types of wood available but maple, which is a fraction of the price, is also a good choice."

Slate has been used to build roofs since the Industrial Revolution, as it is both waterproof and resistant to fire and frost. Despite seeming invincible though, it can still sustain damage. Fortunately Buy Roof Slate (01296 658 396, buyroofslate.co.uk) stocks both new and reclaimed natural roofing slate; the latter is carefully sourced, sorted and graded from its own demolition company. As well as traditional Welsh slate, the company also stocks some Spanish and Brazilian slates, giving you plenty of options for any roof jobs on your agenda.

FEELING THE HEAT

Sadly, it's often the case that original features suffer their fair share of knocks and scrapes, but thankfully, there are many reputable companies which will bring them back up to a usable standard. One such expert is Salvagedoctor, who specialises in cast iron radiators. Its knowledgeable team can build and adjust all cast-iron radiators to length for your specific requirements. These statement fixtures can instantly return period detail and style to your property, or can be used in more contemporary schemes as a stand-out piece among understated, modern fittings.

Another reclaimed feature which will add true period charm to your property is wall panelling. Fusing decorative detail with insulation against damp and draughts, it's been around since the 15th century. Many houses had their original wall panelling removed in the 1960s and '70s in an attempt at modernisation, but it is now being reintroduced into homes to reduce heating bills. Robert Mills Ltd offers a wide range of architectural antiques including an array of original panelling, which is ideal for reinstating the original period style back into your home.

Currently, only 1% of UK-based building projects use reclaimed materials, so there is a huge wealth of fabulous original features and salvaged goods waiting to be used. Just make sure you plan ahead if you're considering using them in your home. It's likely that you will need to make alterations to older pieces to adhere to modern standards and regulations, or adapt layouts to accommodate older elements. Some pre-used materials will be supplied cleaned and ready to use but others may require a bit of work before you can bring them into your home, so be willing to don your Marigolds and use some elbow grease.

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The premier architectural salvage and reclamation centre in East Anglia, Abbots Bridge Home and Garden Renovation Centre, sits on a one acre site just a few miles from Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk. Our two storey 9000sq.ft. warehouse offers affordable architectural salvage, reclaimed building materials and salvaged period features ideal for your property renovation.

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Architectural Salvage

With a wide range of salvage finds to discover, this Northern treasure trove in the heart of Manchester is a one-stop shop for all your period home needs.

Offering items for every project and budget; from reclaimed flooring, period doors, fireplaces, stained glass, cast iron radiators to mid-century furniture and a huge range of salvaged lighting.

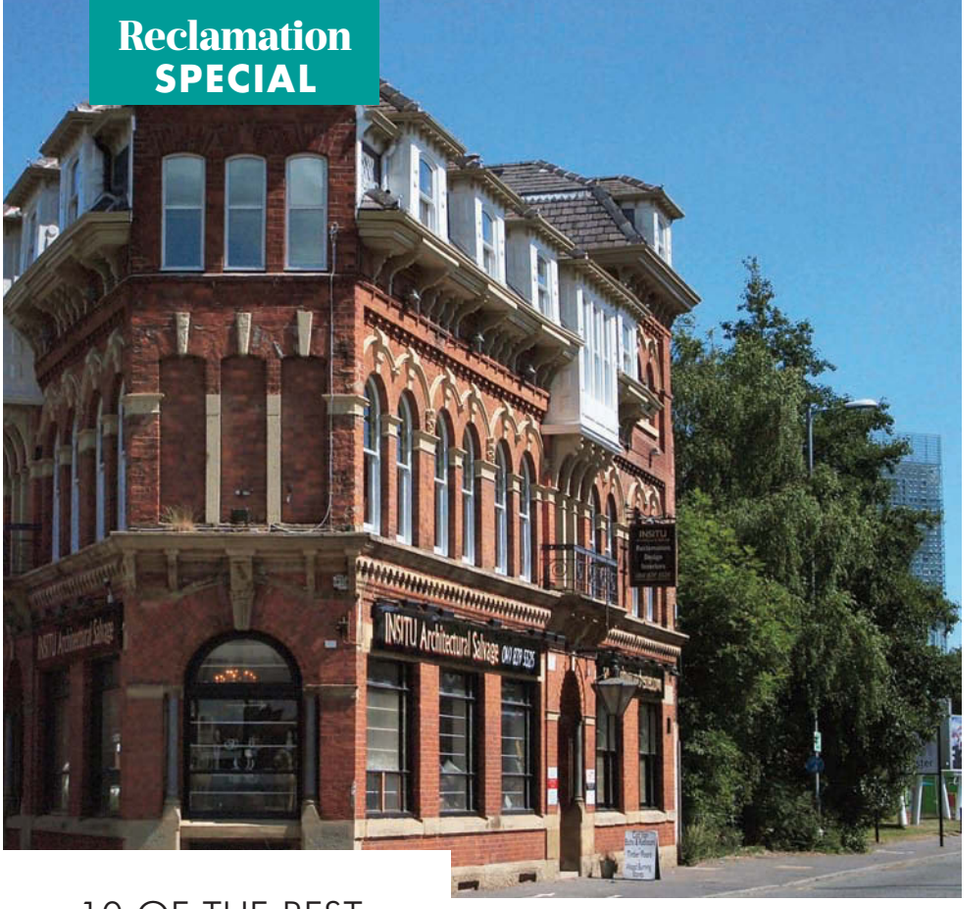
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1 INSITU ARCHITECTURAL SALVAGE

Located in a Grade II listed building in the heart of Manchester's Castlefield district, Insitu stocks everything you need to transform a period property into your dream home. It was launched in 1984 as a reclaimed door and fireplace specialist and has since grown to include all manner of architectural and classic designs, including reclaimed timber flooring, period doors, cast-iron radiators, fireplaces and stoves, stained glass, wall cladding, sanitaryware, classic lighting and furniture.

0161 839 5525, insitumanchester.com

10 OF THE BEST...

RECLAMATION YARDS

Find the perfect piece for your home with our pick of top dealers



3 BURGESS RECLAMATION

This extensive yard has a rich history dating back to the 1950s when George Burgess founded the company, which was known then as Burgess and Sons. George and his sons worked as demolition contractors in the Bicester area, including the Regal cinema Bicester and the old Crown Walk site, and these projects generated a wealth of reclaimed items, which inspired them to form a yard which now occupies a larger site on the Bicester to Banbury road, by the village of Souldern.

01869 346 347, burgessreclamation.co.uk



2 ACE RECLAMATION AND SALVAGE

For over 35 years, this family run business has specialised in reclaimed and traditional materials, as well as architectural antiques. It displays its large variety of goods over an acre of land in East Dorset, near the Hampshire border, and has a team of knowledgeable staff on hand to aid you in your search. Following The Salvo Code, Ace ensures you'll be safe in any purchase, so you won't need to worry about the security of your buy.

01202 579 222, ace-reclamation.co.uk



4 WYE VALLEY RECLAMATION

As one of the largest reclaimed building material and architectural salvage companies in the UK, Wye Valley Reclamation stocks everything from bathroom fittings to fireplaces, as well as unique garden features, such as cider mills, staddle stones and troughs. Many of the items come with a detailed history, explaining when and where they were made. Or, if there's a particular treasure you're on the hunt for, simply get in touch and a member of staff will endeavour to find it on your behalf.

01432 353 606, warehouse701.co.uk

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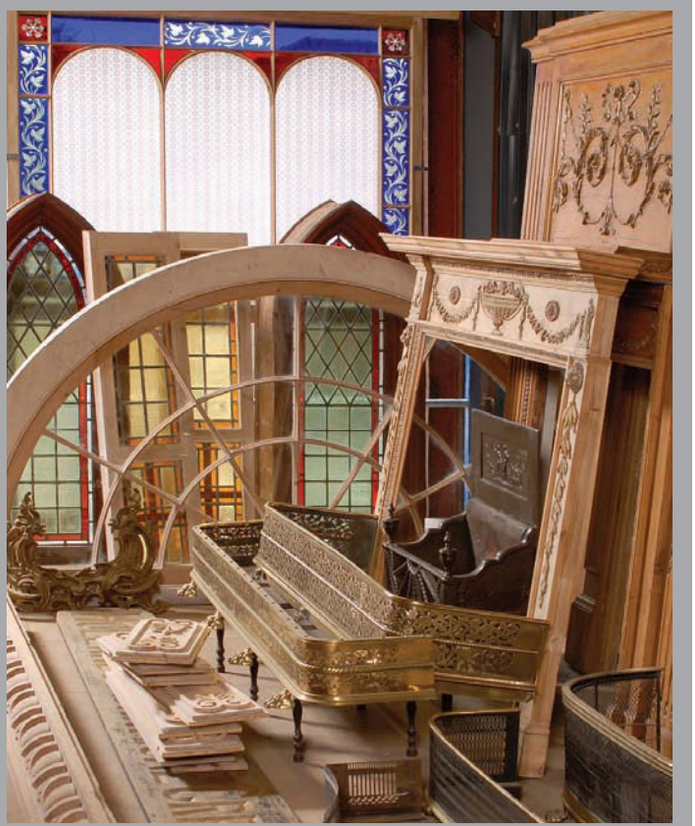


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5 WILSONS CONSERVATION BUILDING PRODUCTS

As one of the UK's premier architectural salvage and design businesses, Wilsons Yard provides high-quality and spectacular products to customers worldwide. This family run company is in its fifth decade of trading, and is dedicated to restoring period properties back to their original grandeur.
0289 2692 304, wilsonsyard.com

6 ABBOTS BRIDGE RECLAMATION

Abbots Bridge Home and Garden Renovation Centre is the premier architectural salvage and reclamation site in East Anglia, sitting on a one acre site just a few miles from Bury St Edmunds. Its two storey, 9,000 square ft warehouse offers affordable architectural salvage, reclaimed building materials and salvaged period features, ideal for any property renovation.
01284 828 081, abbotsbridge.com



7 CHESHIRE DEMOLITION AND EXCAVATION CONTRACTORS

With three-acres of reclaimed artefacts on show, this Cheshire based yard is perfect if you're restoring an authentic period property or looking for treasures to upcycle. You can call the company if there's something particular you have in mind, while demolition services and skip hire are also available to help you in your home project.
01625 424 433, cheshiredemolition.co.uk

8 SYMONDS SALVAGE

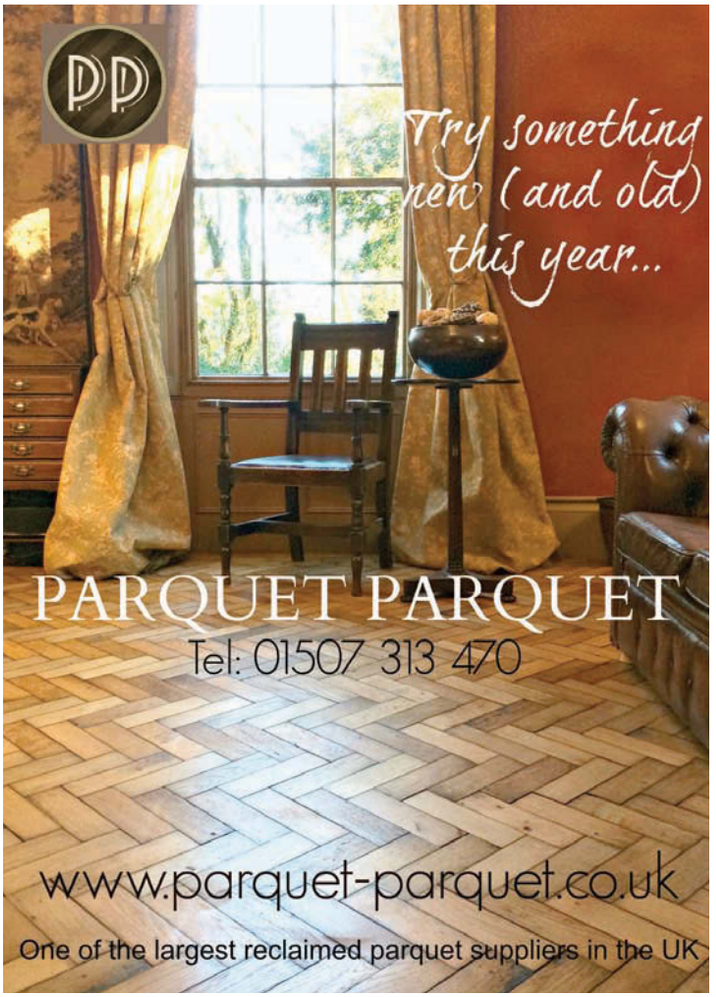
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01233 820 724, symondssalvage.co.uk

9 WARWICK RECLAMATION

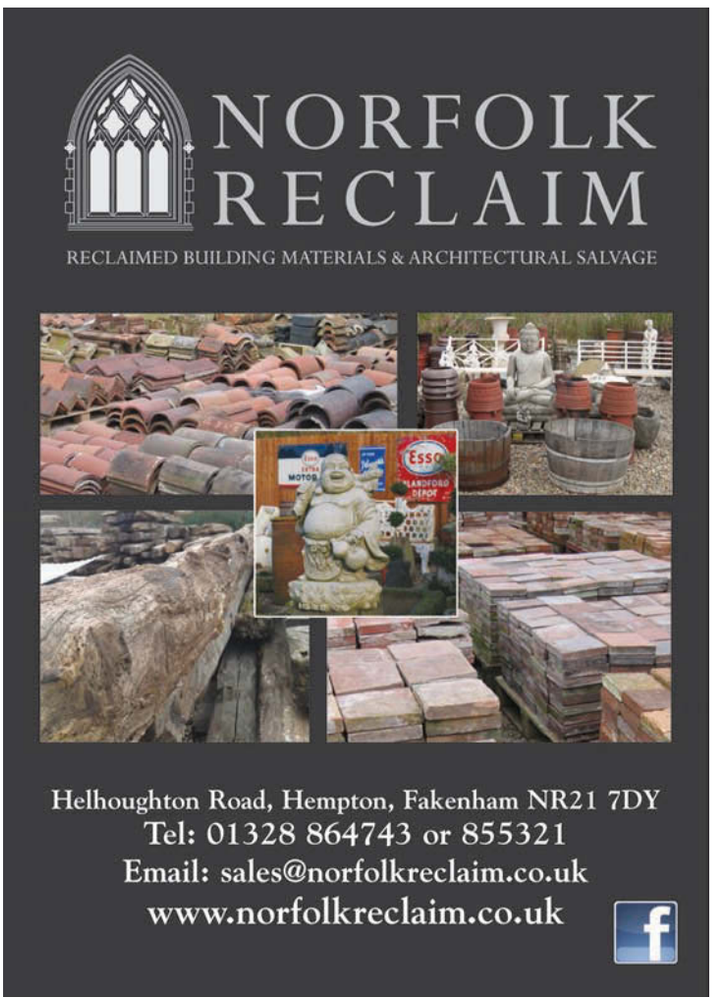
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01926 881 539, warwickreclamation.co.uk

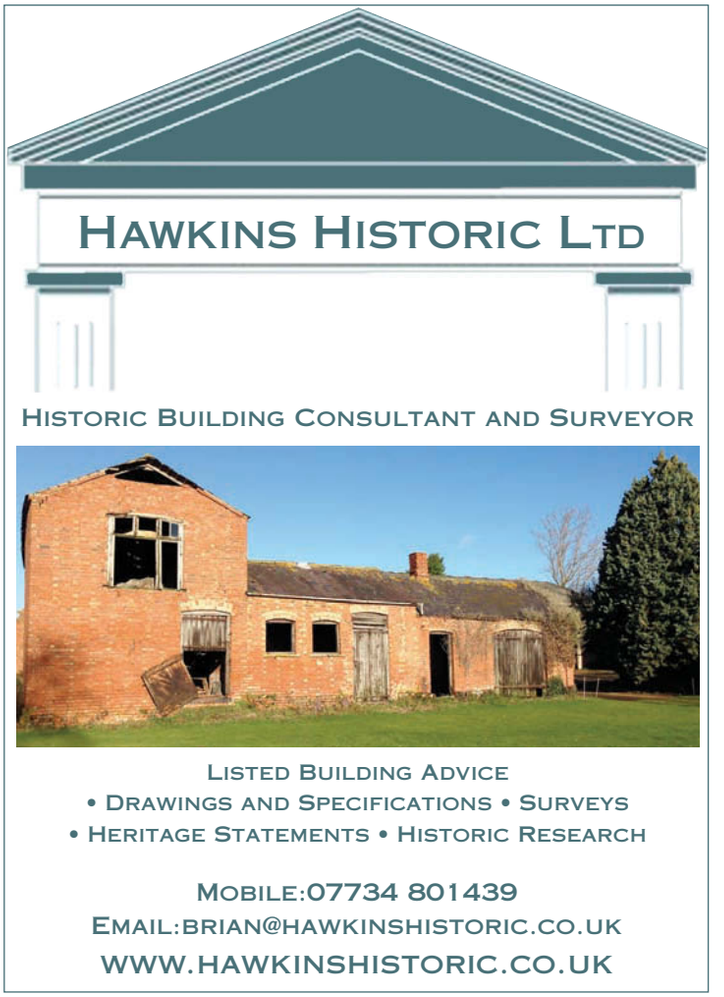
10 RANSFORDS CONSERVATION AND RECLAIMED BUILDING SUPPLIES

Ransfords has a fantastic array of reclaimed building materials, sourced from demolished buildings. The salvaged material is cleaned and transported to its depot where it is kept, ready to help restore Britain's architectural heritage. With a strong reputation for excellent service, quality materials and expert solutions, the yard, which is located in the heart of the Shires, is worth making the trip for.
01327 705 310, ransfords.com


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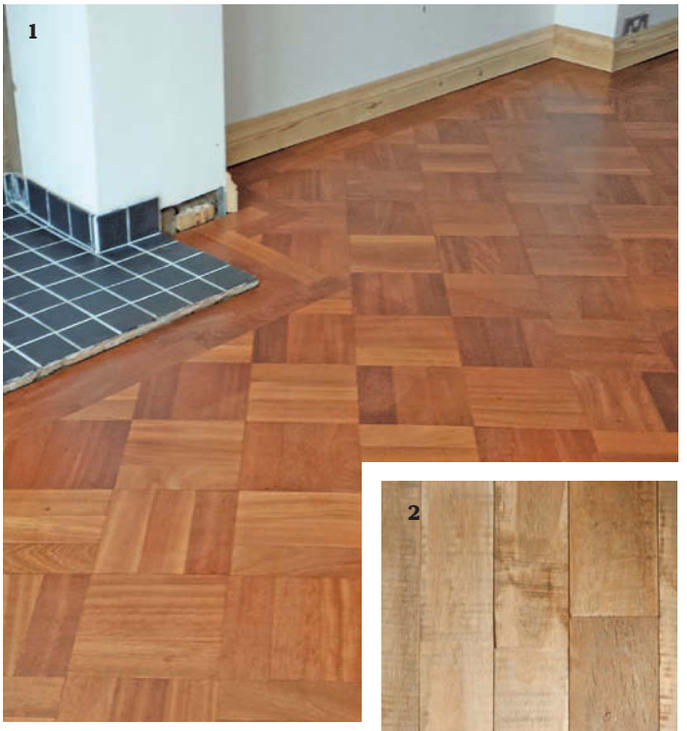
UP TO SCRATCH

Discover the joys of a reclaimed floor with our handy guide to using salvage

Reclaimed flooring is perfect for bringing salvage chic into your home and emphasising its period style, particularly if you have a specific era in mind, such as Victorian or Edwardian. But before you commit to any underfoot fitting, make sure you research the specific care requirements of the wood and take foot traffic into consideration when deciding which one to opt for.

STORE AND ORDER

It's also vital you inspect the wood in its raw state to make sure your purchase is a worthy one. Take a close look at the condition of floorboards before buying, as this way you can check if the wood is genuinely reclaimed, and not just new wood masquerading as old wood (which is becoming more common due to the rising popularity of the shabby-chic effect). Take note of where the wood has been stored – if it has been left outdoors, it may have been damaged by wet, cold weather, which will diminish its quality. It's also crucial to evaluate how much, if any, refurbishment the floorboards will need, as this is a labour-intensive task that could prove costly, so you may want to consider other options or consult a specialist if the boards are in bad shape. Meeting the seller or dealer can also be reassuring, so you can go ahead with your purchase and fit your floor with confidence.







1 Parquet Parquet has rare access to types of high-quality, slow-grown timber which is no longer commercially available. Some timber is suitable for energy efficient underfloor heating systems too, so you can keep your period home up-to-date. **01507 313 470, parquet-parquet.co.uk**

2 If you love the cool tones of a Nordic wash or the warm ambience of an antique patina, this superb mid-century French oak is perfect for your home and is available in many widths (with original texture and band saw marks), costing £95 per m^2. **020 7250 1108, reclaimedflooringco.com**

3 Bakers Timber Reclaim stock a vast range of reclaimed timber products on site, including large oak and pine beams from old buildings, seasoned oak which can be cut to suit individual measurements, large stocks of old floorboards, pine oak and other hard and soft woods. **01328 855 321, bakerstimberreclaim.co.uk**

WHICH WOOD

The use and location of your boards is a determining factor in the type you choose for your home. While softwood floors, such as pine, can be easily dented or scratched by furniture and heeled shoes, you can apply hardening oil to the surface to make it more durable. Hardwood floors, such as oak or teak, don't damage as easily because only the top finishing layer can be marked, and this can be repaired quite easily with a new coat of wax or oil. Its durability makes it ideal for busy indoor areas, such as hallways and landings.

Another benefit of reclaimed flooring is the positive impact it has on the environment, as it helps to reduce deforestation. It's a great alternative to buying new flooring, as it provides a sustainable solution to our modern day requirements of quality flooring. Plus, by opting for reclaimed floorboards, you can rest assured in the authenticity of your home and its traditional period scheme.



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QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

A FINE OUTLOOK

Make sure your apertures look glorious with the best ideas from our windows experts this month

Listed lovely

I live in a listed building and need some help repairing the windows. What do you suggest?

It is absolutely crucial that you work with a specialist who has plenty of experience in windows and renovation work to listed properties. I would also suggest that you ask to see their portfolio and find out about who they have worked for. At Bartram's we have a unique appreciation of traditional houses and building techniques. We have many years of experience in the sympathetic repair of properties; developing a strong reputation as a specialist contractor in the conservation sector and working closely with conservation officers. We employ our own highly skilled team of craftsmen, capable of providing a host of traditional craft skills, and we have a wealth of knowledge concerning historically appropriate materials and building techniques.

Steve Bartram, Bartrams Joinery
01283 517 300, bartramsjoinery.co.uk



Double trouble?

My windows appear to be in good condition but I want them to be double-glazed. Do I have to replace them entirely?

No, depending on their condition there are options. If the windows are in good condition and are substantial enough to take double-glazing then the old glass can be removed and new double-glazed units can be fitted using a specialist process called Bi–glass. Alternatively, if the frames are sound but the sliding sashes are not so good, these can be removed and new matching, fully painted, double-glazed ones can be re-fitted to the existing frames. These services can save you a lot of money, perform very well and are far less disruptive than completely replacing your windows so be sure to ask the surveyor about your options!

Richard Dollar, The Sash Window Workshop
01344 868 668, sashwindow.com



Save my sashes

How do I restore my timber sash windows to their traditional glory?

Sash windows have often been in place for decades and are painted over and over again. They may be in good condition underneath but they will need to be stripped back to the bare wood and repainted in order to guarantee longer life. If access is straightforward, it is best to remove the sashes from the frames so that all the component parts can be thoroughly examined. Once the multiple layers of paint have been removed, it is possible to redefine the original profiles and if the timber is fundamentally sound, minor repairs to the wood can be undertaken. The windows can then be redecorated with specialist timber paint. It often makes sense to draught seal the windows as well, prior to reassembly and the final adjustments necessary to ensure proper operation.

Tim Hughes, The London Window Painting Company
020 8935 5096, londonwindowpainters.com

Hold tight

I'm looking for some stylish window fasteners. Any ideas?

Never take short cuts when it comes to window furniture, as you are investing in equipment which you may use several times a day for years. Look for something with a simple design which is easy for everyone in your household to operate and will feel comfortable to the touch. Our new bulbend casement fasteners might be just the ticket for you. We have two new versions, a standard (FB103) and an offset (FB104), which are available in four different finishes and are designed to match our new bulb end casement stays.

Robin Graham, Fulton & Bray
01228 672 900, fultonandbray.co.uk





Georgian glory

I am looking for replacement windows for a Georgian house. Can you help?

Yes, we certainly can give you a variation of external Georgian-bar grid layouts on your windows. The bars are solid powder-coated aluminium. The external aluminium bars are either an ogee detail or putty line. A third aluminium flat bar is available at 32mm wide x 2mm thick, and this can go both sides of the sealed unit. This bar is used when customers only want a single divided sash effect as close to the meeting rail height (36mm) as possible. Both types of external bar are bonded to clean glass surfaces using acrylic high security tapes. The cavity of the sealed unit is filled with an integral rectangular bar. These are immediately behind the external bar and give the appearance of true individual panes. Due to the nature of window cleaners and the possibility of their holding on to the bars whilst cleaning, these bars cannot be guaranteed.

Emma Phillips, Alumatherm Windows Ltd
01778 347 147, alumathermwindows.co.uk

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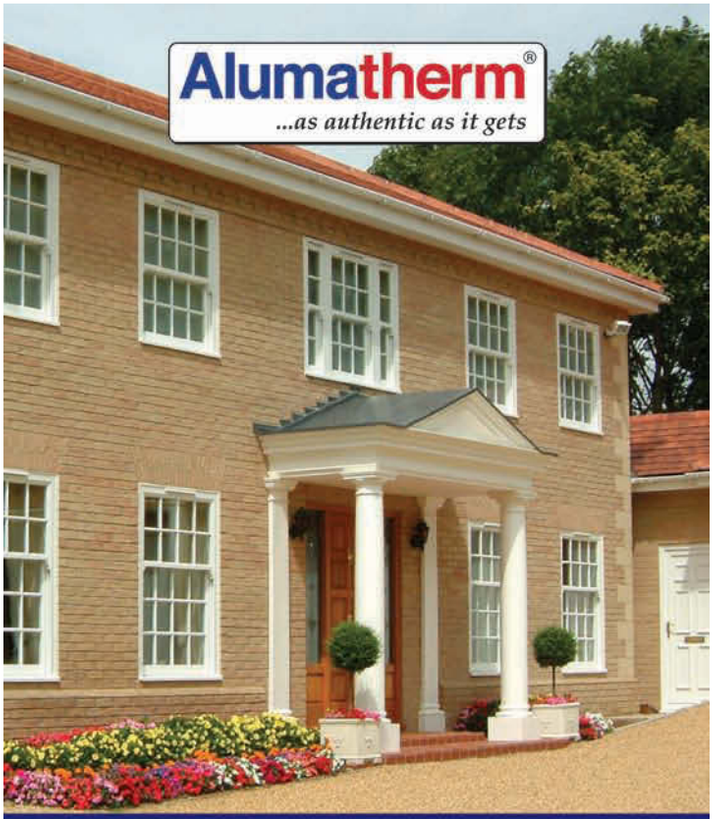
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COMPLETE GUIDE TO

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Inspiration and practical advice for owners of older properties



On the move

If you're regularly jetting off on holiday, invest in the new Traveldapters so that you don't have to worry about connecting your electrical devices when you're far from home. The range of different models allows you to plug in up to six appliances at once, with a convenient long lead so that you can keep everything to hand. Plus, it provides a secure connection to mains sockets and comes in a variety of sizes. For more details, call **0845 643 4386** or visit **traveldapter.com**

IN THE KNOW

The Property Care Association (PCA) has launched a new website to give homeowners an in-depth insight into the causes and effects of wet and dry rot. This is particularly useful for this time of year, as cases of rot are set to increase after winter due to high levels of rainfall. ***property-care.org***

Glow **with it** ▸

Change the ambience in your abode with the new range of LED ContourHD lighting strips from John Cullen Lighting. Available in an array of classic colours, from clear white to atmospheric amber, ContourHD strips are priced at £118 per metre, and can be cut to size for easy installation. A water-resistant version is also available, so you can brighten up your bathroom too. Find out more by calling **020 7371 9000,** or take a peek at more colour options by heading to **johncullenlighting.co.uk**



One hit wonder

When renovating a period property, you often take on complex tasks which you won't need to complete again for a long time, if at all. With this in mind, check out Homebase's Hire Station. It will help to save on the expense of purchasing equipment you may only use once, allowing you to hire tools for the duration of your project. With over 2,000 products to choose from, you'll find everything you need to undergo your home makeover, from cement mixers, mini-diggers and floor sanders to power tools, scaffolding and specialist safety equipment. ***0800 0304 720, homebase.co.uk***

Sumptuous Seating

Create a comfy and portable cushion with this simple sewing method

This plush pillow is perfect for lounging on in the garden now that the sun has arrived, or whipping out when in need of impromptu chairs. This custom-made oversized cushion is plump, comfortable and ideal for areas with limited space, plus, with a useful handle for easy storage and transport, you can transform any floor into a snug relaxation area for adults and children alike. Using this easy stitching technique, you can customise your cushion with stylish finishing touches, allowing you and your guests to sit pretty anywhere in your home.



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AMANDA WALKER

SQUAB CUSHION

YOU'LL NEED:

- Foam: 50cm square, 10cm deep
- Clarke & Clarke fabric: Fanfare Heather, Lindow linen
- Wadding
- Lining fabric
- Iron-on interfacing
- Upholstery needle
- Strong thread

1 Create an undercover by placing a length of lining around the foam square, as if you are wrapping a present, as this will prevent the upper fabric sticking to the foam when adjustments have to be made. Bring over the two ends, folding under the raw edge. With a needle and thread, hand stitch across the opening. Fold in the corners, tucking under the raw edges, and hand stitch across.

2 Cut two squares in the floral fabric 10cm larger than the foam block (60cm x 60cm). Make four strips in plain material, 10cm longer and wider than the depth and length of the foam block (20cm x 60cm). Cut out all these pieces in wadding and cut the handle in floral fabric – two strips, 7cm x 30cm, trimming an arrow head at both ends.













3 Lay out the fabric of one handle piece and with the wrong side up, press the iron-on interfacing onto it. Then, with the right sides of the fabric facing, stitch the two handle pieces together with a 1cm seam allowance, leaving a gap of approximately 5cm in one of the straight edges. Trim away all of the corners and turn the handle to the right side through the gap. Tease out the corners and press. Close the gap with a few hand slip-stitches and add a row of top stitching 5mm away from the edge.

4 Position the wadding, laying each piece onto the wrong side of each of the corresponding pieces and pin or tack in place. Position and pin the assembled handle onto the centre of one of the narrow strips cut in the plain fabric and pin the handle so it sits away from the strip in a loop. Fix the handle to the strip by stitching a square shape just inside the arrow head, leaving the arrow shape free from the plain strip, then stitch a cross in the centre of the square. Repeat the process at the remaining end.

5 Attach the four corners of the narrow strips, which become the sides of the cushion. Pin and sew each of the four strips on the narrow ends together with 1.5cm seam allowances, starting and finishing the stitching 1.5cm from the start and finish of the seam line.

6 Place and pin one of the floral squares into the frame made by stitching the four strips together, with the right sides of the fabric facing each other. The corners of the squares should be positioned into the gaps left at the beginning of the stitching lines. Pin all around the sides and stitch in place with a 1.5cm seam allowance. Each edge will be stitched with a separate seam line. Repeat the process with the remaining square and to the remaining edges of the box frame. In one of the edges, leave a gap of 30cm.

7 Trim away the excess fabric from the corners and turn the cover to the right side, then tease out the corners and press. Place the covered foam block into the cover, pin the edges of the gap together and stitch closed with hand slip-stitches. Don't panic – the cover will be much larger than the foam block. Centre the foam inside the cover and pin the excess fabric together, making a roll on all the edges. When you are happy that the rolls are even, thread an upholstery needle with strong thread and make large stab stitches around all of the edges at the top and base of the cushion.

Bring a burst of colour into your home by using bright and bold fabrics to cover your cushion, or opt for striking statement patterns



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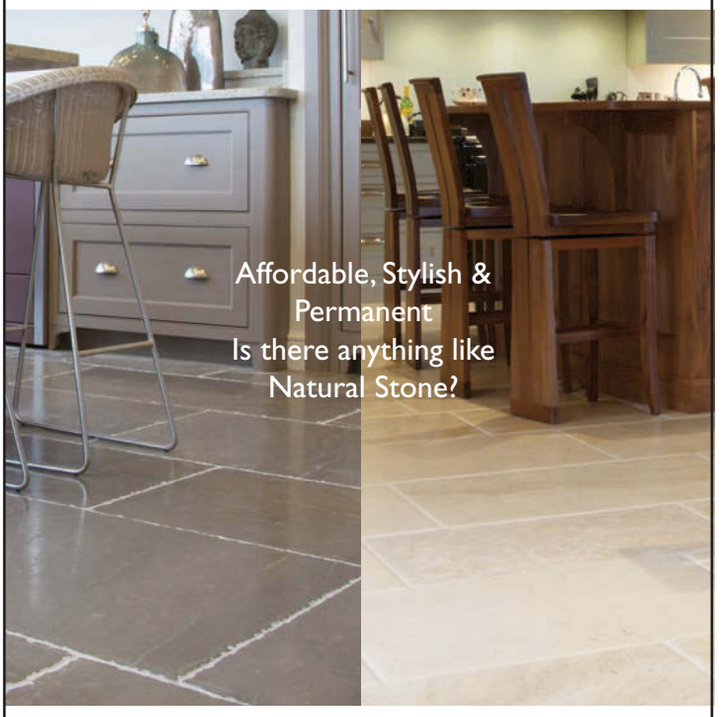
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IMITATION GAME

Decide which underfoot option is best for you with our guide to the different types of wooden flooring

Durable and beautiful, real wood flooring is something that many of us dream of having in our homes. But if your abode isn't blessed with original wooden floors, it's worth considering the other options before you splash the cash on the real thing.

There are two main alternatives to solid wood – engineered wood flooring and laminate. There is often some confusion about the difference between the two, with many people believing them to be the same thing. Engineered wood flooring is a man-made product that is created from natural materials, and is typically formed from layers of ply topped with a layer of solid wood. The advantage of this over solid wood flooring is its resistance to temperature, meaning it can be used in bathrooms and kitchens without the risk of expansion or contraction. Laminate flooring is also man-made but is entirely synthetic, and consists of layers of fibreboard planks covered by a photographic image of wood. Each variety of flooring comes with its own list of pros and cons, which will help you to determine which type will work best in your period property.

MONEY TALKS

Laminate is often the cheaper option of the two, but this type of flooring usually requires underlay to be fitted during installation, which can quickly make the price rise. Engineered wood will also last much longer than laminate – up to 75 years as opposed to 20 – so while it is more expensive at the time, it may be more cost-effective in the long term.

You won't be stuck for choice with either style of flooring, as there are hundreds of different colours and patinas available in both types. While laminate offers more variety out of the two – including a huge range of imitations of natural materials – engineered wood has an undeniably better finish, with a closer resemblance to the real thing. Visual impact is a crucial element to consider, particularly as flooring can effect the value of your home.

FIT THE BILL

When it comes to installation, both types of flooring are relatively straightforward to fit. Laminate can be deemed as slightly easier, as it uses a simple click-lock system, whereas engineered uses tongue and groove. If you're not entirely confident in your ability to perform this DIY task, it is worth calling in a professional, as any floor laid badly will not look good.

One of the key benefits that any type of wooden flooring has over carpet is easy maintenance. Stains can be swept up with a cloth, and pet hairs removed with a quick sweep of the broom. Engineered wood flooring can handle a light mopping on a regular basis, but don't be overzealous with water on laminate, as this will cause the boards to warp and bend. Unlike laminate, engineered wood can also be carefully re-sanded and re-finished, depending on the thickness of the top layer, which allows you to revitalise your flooring at least three times during its lifetime.

When it comes to picking the perfect floor for your property, there's a lot more to think about than just the colour or finish. Make sure it caters to your needs, for instance, non-slip varieties will minimise the chance of any unfortunate accidents. Weigh up the benefits of short term savings versus long term costs before you make any decisions; what may save you a few pennies now may cost you many more in the future.



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Burning up

We discover the inspiration behind The Radiator Factory's beautiful designs

When it comes to updating the features of a period home, retaining a timeless and traditional feel is vital, but it's equally important that any practical elements support a modern lifestyle and its demands. Striking the balance between function and fashion can be tricky to get right in any property, but thanks to The Radiator Factory, it's easy to do.

With over 25 years of experience, the company offers over 3,000 bespoke sizes of column radiators, perfect for fitting into unusual areas and awkward spaces in your home. Its portfolio includes a wealth of beautiful, energy efficient and high output designer radiators, which perform at an optimum level at all times, so you can rest assured in your radiator's heating function. Plus, with this vast collection, you can reap the benefits of 21st century heating engineering without compromising your home's period identity. The stunning models showcase a variety of authentic and original styles, while providing your home with warmth, security and cutting-edge design.

UNIVERSAL STYLE

If you want your radiator to make a statement, the designs at The Radiator Factory will do just that. They are unusually inspired by stunning structural landmarks and are cast in Europe, but finished, tested and built in the company workshop in Leicestershire. The Chatsworth, for instance, boasts a simple Edwardian style, influenced by the grand Chatsworth country house in Derbyshire. Its classic architecture is mirrored in the elegant finish of the radiator, which is available in five heights and two depths, as well as four and six column options. Or, if you're a fan of ornate French form, the Belvoir is an ideal choice. Named after the Belvoir castle, the luxury Leicestershire country home, this radiator features a delicate design and comes in three heights and two column depths. With inspiration from real architecture, the authentic style of each model is guaranteed. You can also choose from the company's vast range of old English shades and metallic colours, allowing you to create a radiator to perfectly suit your scheme.

PERFECT FIT

The Radiator Factory also creates radiators to fit bay windows, as many period homes include this traditional feature. Bay windows bring heaps of character to a room, but their unusual shape makes furnishing options limited. The company remedies this with a vast range of angled radiators made to fit your room's exact measurements, including the Round Top Curved model, which is ideal for circular bays. As the name suggests, it boasts a slim rounded top, which will complement the cove beneath any bay window, and comes in a semi-gloss white, creating a sleek and subtle look. The Cru Curved option is a classical alternative with clean, defined lines and a column design. Available in a variety of heights and widths as well as a range of colours, you can also opt for welded feet to enhance its visual appeal.

The Radiator Factory's impressive array of designs and styles is available to view at its showroom in Leicestershire, where you'll also discover a wealth of accessories to choose from to complete your heating package.

Turn up the HEAT

To find out more about these stunning radiators and the variety of designs and sizes available, call **0116 260 9257** or visit **radiatorfactory.net** to view the brochure online.

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QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

OUT IN THE OPEN

Our experts dispense their wisdom on making the most of your garden this season

Here comes the sun

I love the idea of a sun room, but I would ideally like to use it all year round. What do you suggest?

Be inspired by this oak frame sun room by Arboreta, which has been designed with dwarf walls so that the glazing does not run down to the ground. This makes the space feel as though it belongs to the rest of the house whilst bringing the outdoors in, as the walls remain low enough to allow a clear view of the outside space. The height of this sun room is in keeping with the rest of the property and the vaulted ceiling provides a feeling of space, while the feature trusses add character and interest to the overall design.

Susan Dickerson, Period Ideas
0800 288 8333, arboreta-oak.com

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Dream weaver

Now that summer is here, I'm keen to spend more time in my garden. What furniture would you recommend?

Rattan furniture is set to be a big trend this season. All of our outdoor rattan furniture is constructed with aluminium frames, making it resistant to the elements and safe from rust. It is also lightweight, so you can move it around your garden with ease. Our hand-woven rattan furniture comes in both black and brown, and we also make weather-proof cushions here in the UK, which are available in a variety of colours. Our Rattan Cube sets feature reinforced glass tops that are shatter-resistant and easy to clean after use, making them ideal for al fresco dining this summer.

Shane Bayliss, Home Life Direct
01283 722 720, homelifedirect.co.uk



Dining out

I love hosting al fresco dinner parties, but I want to ensure my guests are protected from sudden storms. Any suggestions?

There are several options available on the market, such as awnings and parasols, which can provide shelter in certain conditions. However, nothing offers all-round shelter from the elements as well as a veranda. Using a design based on verandas commonly found in the Victorian era, we have come up with our Classic bespoke veranda. It is manufactured with an aluminium frame, has integral guttering and you can opt for glass or polycarbonate for the roof. Combined with lighting and outdoor heating, the Classic veranda will allow you to enjoy meals outside, no matter the weather.

A Perry, Nationwide Home Innovations
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Biggest fan

I'm looking to install a ceiling fan for summer ventilation but I've heard they can also be used in winter. Is this true?

Ceiling fans are great for ventilation during the summer, but most also have a reverse function for use in winter and in areas where warm air gets trapped. Heat rises, which means that the top of the room (where the ceiling fan is) is likely to be warmer than floor level. Using the reverse function on the fan redistributes this warm air and can also make your central heating system more efficient. All Fantasia ceiling fans have a reverse function, controlled by either a switch on the motor or by a remote control handset, depending on the type of model.

Richard Moore, Fantasia Ceiling Fans
01959 564 440, fantasiaceilingfans.com

Custom creation

We would love to have a summerhouse in our garden, but have no idea where to begin in terms of design or style. Can you help?

A summerhouse is a long-term key addition to your garden, so time spent carefully choosing from the many options available will be time well spent. The starting point is to decide how the summerhouse will be used, where it will sit in your garden and if it will have year-round access. Roof styles and paint will make the whole project come together, and its also worth considering extra features, such as a revolving base to follow the sun or built in seating and cushions, to add a personal touch. Remember - a top quality summerhouse is a worthwhile investment.

Chrissie McKinnon, Cat & Mouse Landscapes
01323 833 600, catandmouselandscapes.com





Wooden wonders

I want to invest in some sort of garden feature but I have quite a small outdoor space. What is my best option?

Wooden structures enhance the visual and practical appeal of gardens both large and small, creating a long-lasting, stylish statement. Gazebos are becoming increasingly popular as more home owners appreciate the scope they offer as an affordable outside room for summer entertaining and relaxation. The Ardley gazebo is square in shape and has two open sides and two solid or trellised sides. Whether it's tucked away in a quiet corner or displayed as the centrepiece in your garden, the Ardley is designed as an airy yet sheltered space in which to make the most of the great outdoors.

Jamie Townson, HSP Garden Buildings
01638 583 814, hspgardenbuildings.com

HOME HIGHLIGHTS FOR JUNE

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Make the most of your abode with our selection of products, ideas and expert advice



DARING DESIGN

For a stunning new centrepiece in your abode, browse Montpellier Marble's superb array of fireplaces, tiles and flooring, such as this Giovanna column fireplace. Pictured here in premium Bianco Persiano Marble, it is available from £2,500. To request a colour brochure or for information on your nearest stockist, call ***01452 714 800*** *or visit* ***montpellier.co.uk***

3 OF THE BEST... GARDEN CHAIRS



Sussex sunbed with two cushions, £749, White Stores. **03331 235 235, whitestores.co.uk**



Ridge rattan tub chair, £299, Cuckooland. **01305 231 231, cuckooland.com**



Cambridge synthetic rattan chair, £225, Woven Hill. **01789 741 935, wovenhill.co.uk**

BOLD AS BRASS

Danico Brass provides a wide range of architectural ironmongery, door hardware, electrical accessories, decorative grilles and bathroom fittings, including this stylish door knocker, priced at £64.80. At the showroom and head office in Swiss Cottage, North London, you can browse the whole collection and seek advice from the expert team of staff. **020 7483 4477, danico.co.uk**



BURNING UP



The Yorkshire multi-fuel stove from Dunsley Heat is an innovative new heat source, with remarkably low emissions. With an output of just 8.6 kW for heating (depending on the fuel used), it easily complies with the Clean Air Act, so you won't need to worry about harmful fumes while it warms your home. Find out more by calling ***01484 682 635*** *or visiting* ***dunsleyheat.co.uk***

TURN UP THE HEAT

English Fireplaces offers a wide range of beautiful hand-carved marble, limestone and sandstone models, to bring an air of elegance into your home. Its friendly team are on hand to guide you through all the stages of choosing, installing and using a fireplace, and there's a wealth of style options available, to suit both contemporary and period schemes. For more details, call **01730 888 458** or visit **englishfireplaces.co.uk**





SPRUCE UP

This Henry spray mop is ideal for quickly clearing up spills on tiled or wooden floors. The on-board detachable spray bottle is easy to refill with almost any cleaning solution, while the mop heads can be cleaned in the washing machine. Available from the iconic Henry factory, order your Hetty or Henry mop by calling **01460 269 270** or visiting **numatic.co.uk**



FETCHING FLOORS

Breathe new life into your property with stylish rugs from Pappelina at The Scandinavian Shop. Featuring bold, oriental shapes and rustic folklore patterns, these new floor coverings come in many stunning shades, and are durable, water-resistant and non-slip. For more details on this new collection, call ***01436 673 623*** *or visit* ***scandianvianshop.co.uk***

TRENDY TRIO

MADE.com has released three new collections of outdoor furniture, inspired by Brazil's bustling metropolis, Rio. Lyra combines wooden textures with splashes of green for a tropical feel, while Copa features a reinvented rattan design in bold, statement hues. Or, if you want to soak up the sun in style, Catania includes classy and comfortable cushions to relax on. All three ranges are available by calling ***03442 571 888*** *or visiting* ***made.com***



ROARING SUCCESS

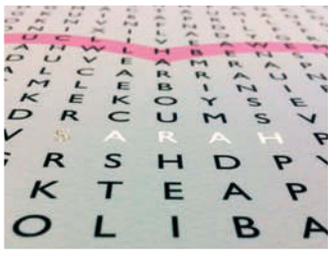
Nu-Flame produces a variety of gas fires that combine industry-leading efficiencies with stylish aesthetics. Its glass fronted range has models with up to 90% efficiency or, for those who prefer the look of an open fire, it has models with efficiencies of 74.4%. Call **020 8254 6802** or visit **nu-flame.co.uk** for more information.

PICK & CHOOSE

At Foy & Co Interiors, there's an abundance of leather and fabric to choose from as well as an array of trimmings, including classic and contemporary prints, luxurious damasks, silks, jacquards, chenille, velvets and a range of plain and semi-plain weaves. With over half a million meters of fabric, more than 500 hides of leather and a wealth of antique furniture, customers can choose their fabric and furniture all under one roof. **01446 771 210, foyandco.uk**

HOME TREASURES

Clive Sefton's unique personalised word search prints are hand-finished in real silver or gold leaf. Clive creates each piece by hand and can include up to 100 hidden words of your choice. Priced from £65, call **01273 383 890** or visit **clivesefton.co.uk**



PICTURE PERFECT



The Country Stile art gallery is home to a variety of framed prints and canvases, including all manner of land, sea and cityscapes, as well as floral, figurative and contemporary art to suit a range of tastes and schemes. This framed print, Hope, costs £55, and is available by calling **01507 525 871** or visiting **thecountrystile.co.uk**

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MARGARET POWLING is one of Britain's best-loved antiques experts. She began collecting as a child and has a life-long love of fine china, beautiful books and historic homes. Her column combines practical tips with the best advice from specialists at auction houses nationwide.


BRITAIN'S HERITAGE Glaze over

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Margaret Powling discovers precious metals as she explores the history behind lustreware

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Homes & Renovating



KATE FAULKNER is famous for her honest and direct approach to renovating and property buying. Drawing from her own experiences on the property ladder, she will help you care for your period house from making an offer to renovating, moving and selling.


LAST WORD Bricks & mortar

KATE FAULKNER

LESSONS I'VE LEARNED

Our property expert explains how to make a period home eco-friendly

For any type of period home, it's crucial to have expert help from someone who has experience of retrofitting eco-friendly products into properties of your type

KATE FAULKNER katefaulkner.co.uk

Gardens & Special Offers



SARAH RAVEN is the queen bee of the British gardening scene. She has been running cooking, flower arranging, growing and gardening classes at her East Sussex farm since 1999. Every month she will reveal her top planting advice and share a fantastic offer.


OUTDOOR IDEAS Perfect produce

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Competitions and giveaways are open to all UK residents aged 18 or over, excluding employees or agents of the associated companies and their families. One entry per person. The prizes detailed in each competition/giveaway cannot be exchanged for goods, or towards the purchase of goods at any retail outlet. Postal entries must be on the coupon provided. Prizes cannot be exchanged for cash, or replaced if lost or damaged. Illegible entries and those that do not abide by these terms and conditions will be disqualified. Prizes must be taken as stated and cannot be deferred. The decision of the judge is final and no correspondence will be entered into. CLOSING DATE: 12th June 2015. Winners will be notified by phone, post or email. A list of winners will be available in writing on request from: Marketing Department, 21-23 Phoenix Court, Hawkins Road, Colchester, Essex CO2 8JY

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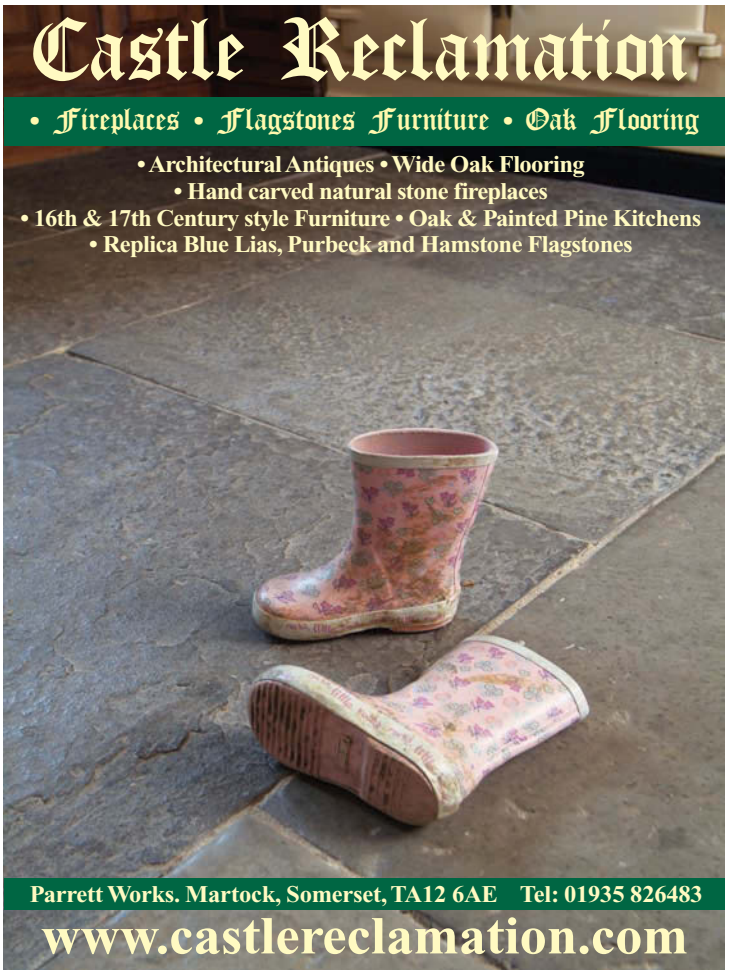


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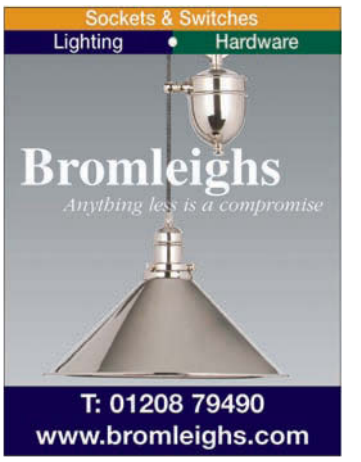
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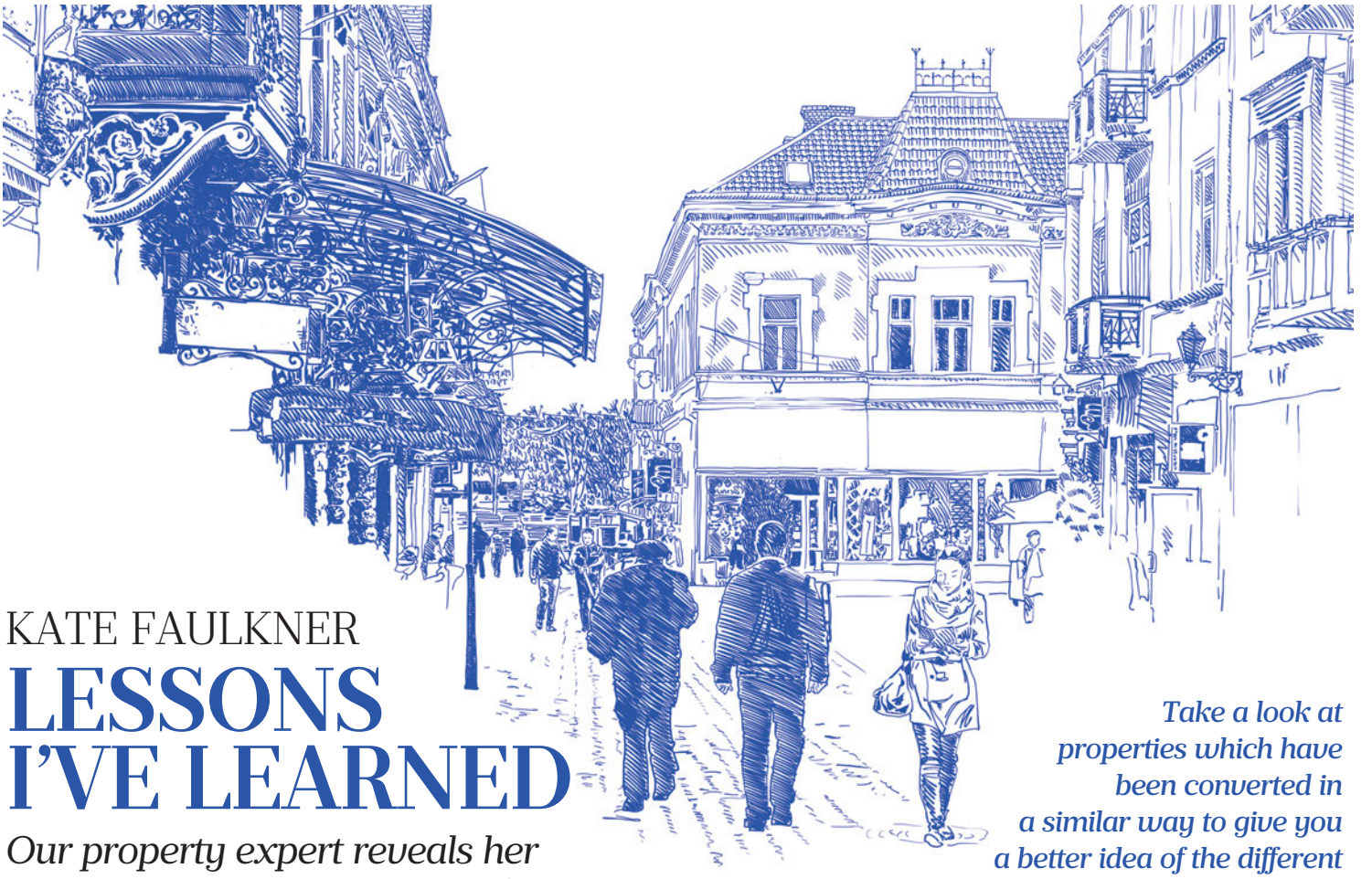


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KATE FAULKNER

LESSONS I'VE LEARNED

Our property expert reveals her top tips on renovating your loft

Take a look at properties which have been converted in a similar way to give you a better idea of the different style options available



If you're looking to add space to your home, converting your loft could provide the extra room you need. Heading south to the basement can be a costly and tricky task, while extensions can alter the appearance of your home and compromise its period look and feel. Loft conversions, on the other hand, can usually be created without affecting your home's exterior shape, so you can retain its original style with the added bonus of more comfort and space.

Prior to planning your project, it's vital to check the essentials, such as the height in the middle of the loft, so you know whether a conversion is possible. Your roof height should be 2.4 metres or more, which is ideal for period property owners because pre-1960s buildings and houses built in the Victorian or Edwardian era usually reach or exceed this height. Your local Building Control is required to sign-off any changes, meaning you won't be able to convert a roof space for sleeping purposes unless you have an accessible fire exit, such as stairs, so it's crucial to consider your landing or access area before preparations begin. You could create stairs which lead directly from your current stairway with a turn to the loft level, or carve out space from another room to create attic access, but think carefully about these options as losing or reducing the size of another room could affect your property's value.

Once you are confident that your home is suitable for a conversion, take a look at properties which have been converted in a similar way to give you a better idea of the different style options available. I find walking around my local area, taking note of nearby properties which have converted loft space and, if possible, the companies that worked on them, helps to determine which route to take and provides a good starting point for hiring reputable businesses.

In terms of planning permission, check with your local council before the work starts (this is mandatory for a Listed home). Although everyone has permitted development rights which allow you to expand your home, this is limited to a maximum size and must follow the property's original footprint, and any previous extensions must be considered too.

Utilise any professionals involved in the project for their advice and knowledge so you are well informed of the possible outcomes of the conversion. A local estate agent can advise on how any changes will impact your property's value – you don't want to lose money if you decide to move in the future. A member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors can look at the structure of your loft and landing space and guide you on the practicalities, including structural issues, approximate costs and potential value added to your property. Don't forget to use online tools too, such as **planningportal.co.uk**, which are handy and free.

Lastly, make sure anyone involved in the conversion is aware of the latest planning and building regulation contracts. Get a solicitor to check the contract of anyone you hire to work on your home, or download your own from the Federation of Master Builders website, so if the worst happens, you're legally covered. Loft conversions can be a complex renovation for your home, so be organised and well prepared before you embark on your exciting new plans!

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Kate is one of the UK's leading residential property experts. She writes *Which?* Property books and regularly appears on the BBC and ITV news as well as Radio 4 and 5live. Find out more at **propertychecklists.co.uk**

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